







NSF

NSF's Nick Friedberg and Jamie Haller want their clothes to look and feel like they've been through the ringer. The duo washes, distresses, and dyes every garment (sometimes twice) in pursuit of that lived-in vintage look and feel. It's the epitome of West Coast cool: casual and comfortable, with a little bit of grunge thrown in for good measure. NSF does all the work, you get all the glory.













STAMPD

Forget color and logos. Instead, mix athletic gear with streetwear — and focus on how it all fits. That's the formula for Stampd, Chris Stamp's mashup of West Coast surf culture with East Coast street attitude. The result is a line of futuristic sportswear with a gloriously simple color palette (black, white, repeat).





DAVID HART

David Hart designs sophisticated clothing with a nod to the past. Inspired by the classic midcentury American uniform, Hart updates the impeccable tailoring of the 50s and 60s with modern fabrics and colors. Think suits, topcoats, sweaters, and polos that are retro (without living in the past) and razor sharp (yet easy to pull off).











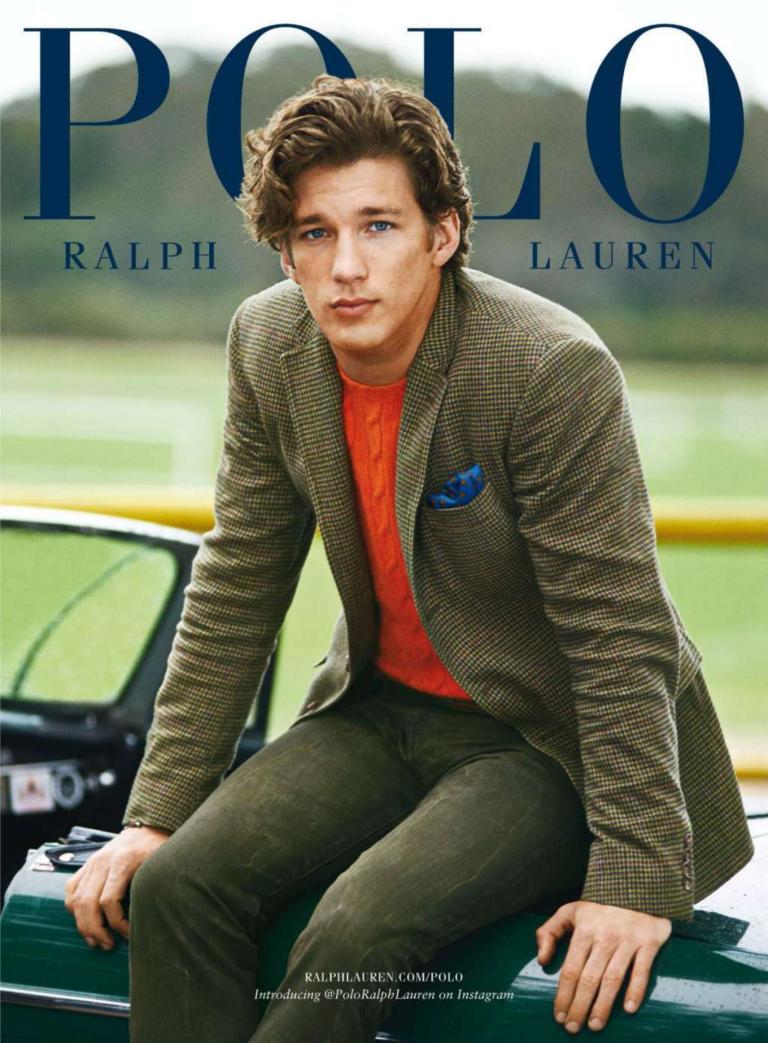


the Hill-side

Brooklyn-based brothers Emil and Sandy Corsillo have traveled far and wide on a quest to find the world's most unique textiles. Selvage denim, authentic indigo, and unlikely camos have all made their way into a collection that's influenced in equal measure by Japanese street style and American vintage.

LIMITED EDITION COLLECTION IN STORE AND ONLINE SEPTEMBER 29







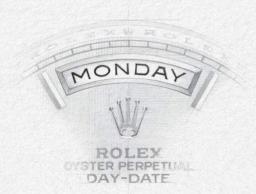








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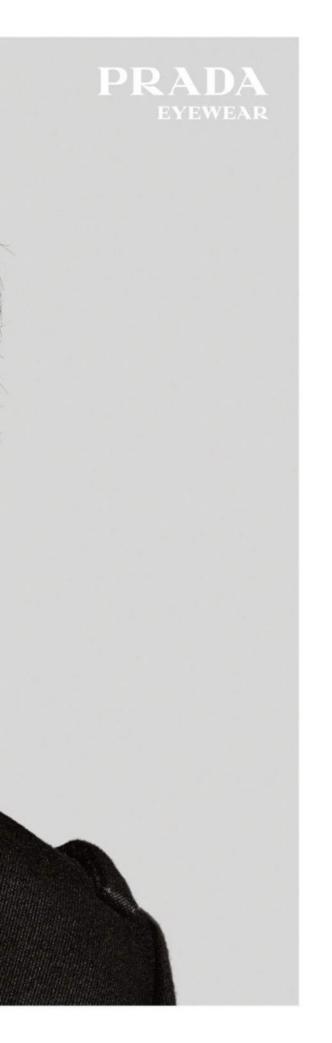




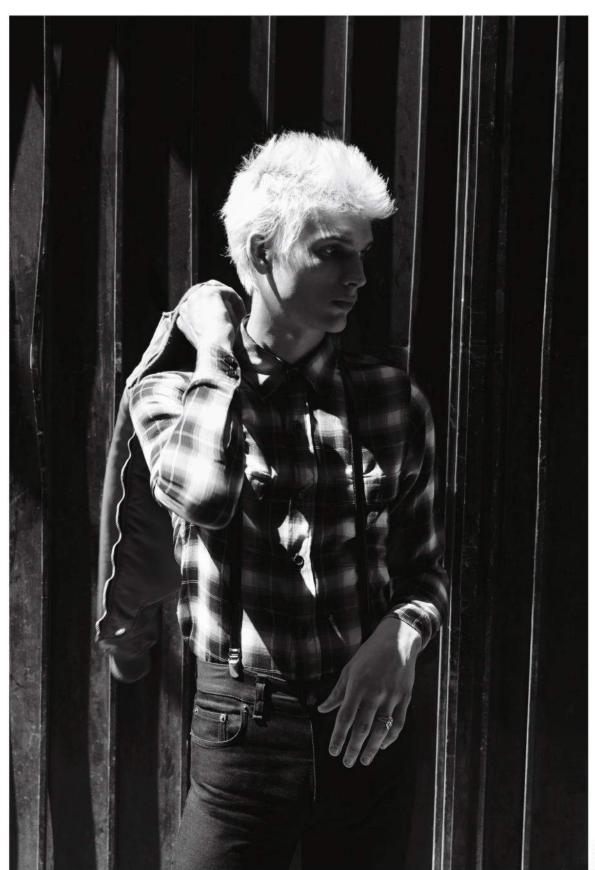
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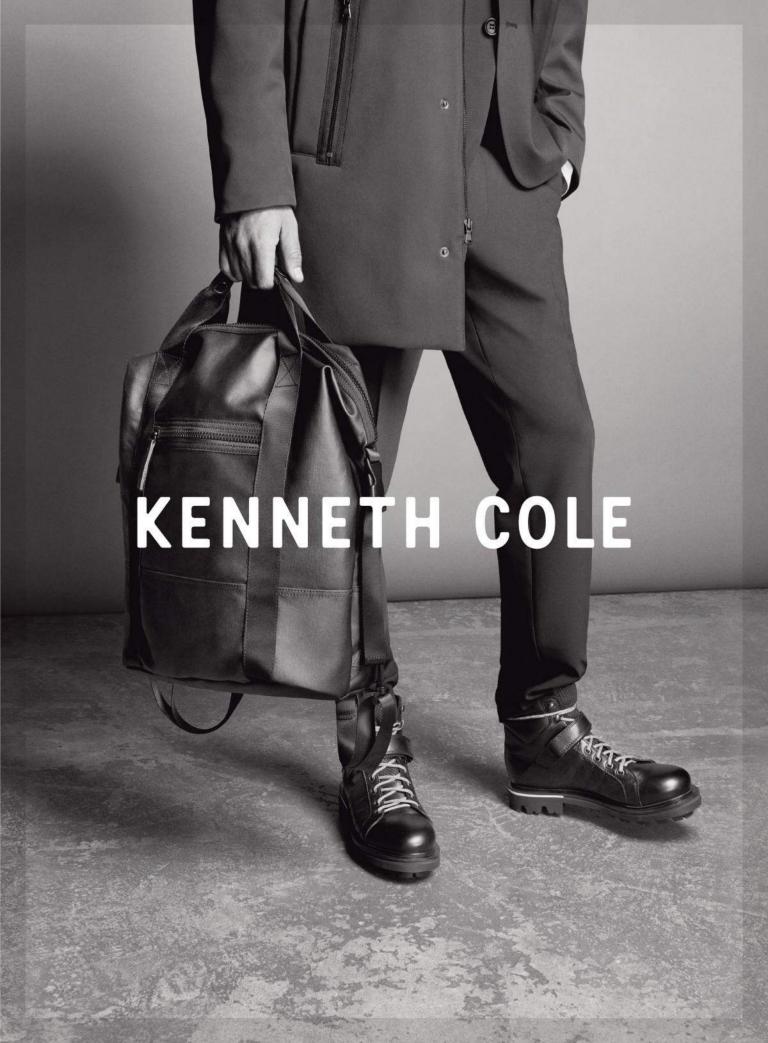
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THE POLO: A LACOSTE ORIGINAL

What makes the original Polo iconic? *GQ* Editor-at-Large, Michael Hainey, and Scott Schuman, creator of **The Sartorialist**, sit down with style blogger Justin Livingston of **Scout Sixteen**, to discuss the impact of the **LACOSTE** Polo and its journey from the tennis court to the streets of fashion week. Check out their video and shop the exclusive collection of *GQ*-approved iconic LACOSTE Polo looks at **gq.com/lacoste**.

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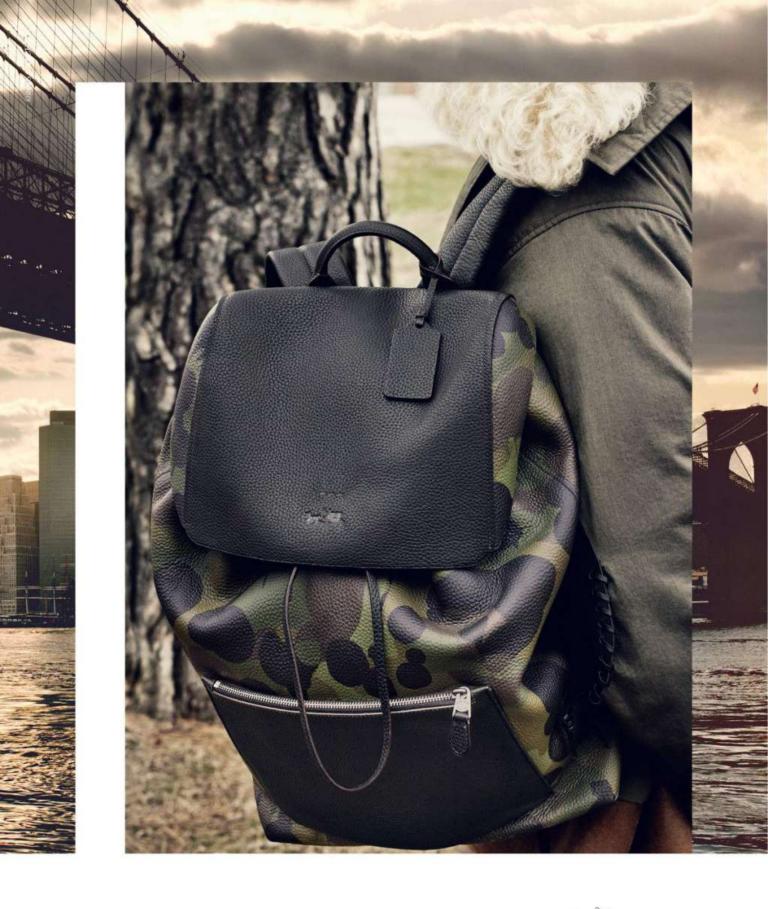












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PAGE 1/3



Nicki Minaj and Meek Mill run the risk of a paper cut more than most.

On Mill, polo shirt, \$1,140, by Berluti. Watch by Rolex. On Minaj, bra by Zana Bayne. Skirt by T by Alexander Wang. 2016 Mercedes-Maybach S600 by Mercedes-Benz.

Departments

56 Letter from the Editor 64 GQHQ 71 Manual 98 The Style Guy 254 Backstory

Behind the scenes with

Meek Mill and Nicki Minaj

GQ Intelligence

137 The Punch List

Our cheat sheet to everything you need to see, hear, and read this month, from Jessica Chastain's back-to-back blockbusters to Young Thug's post-lyrics hip-hop

The Empire Talks Back Lee Daniels—Oscar

nominee, Empire cocreator—isn't afraid to speak his mind BY ZACH BARON 164 Today's Game Is Brought to You by...Irony

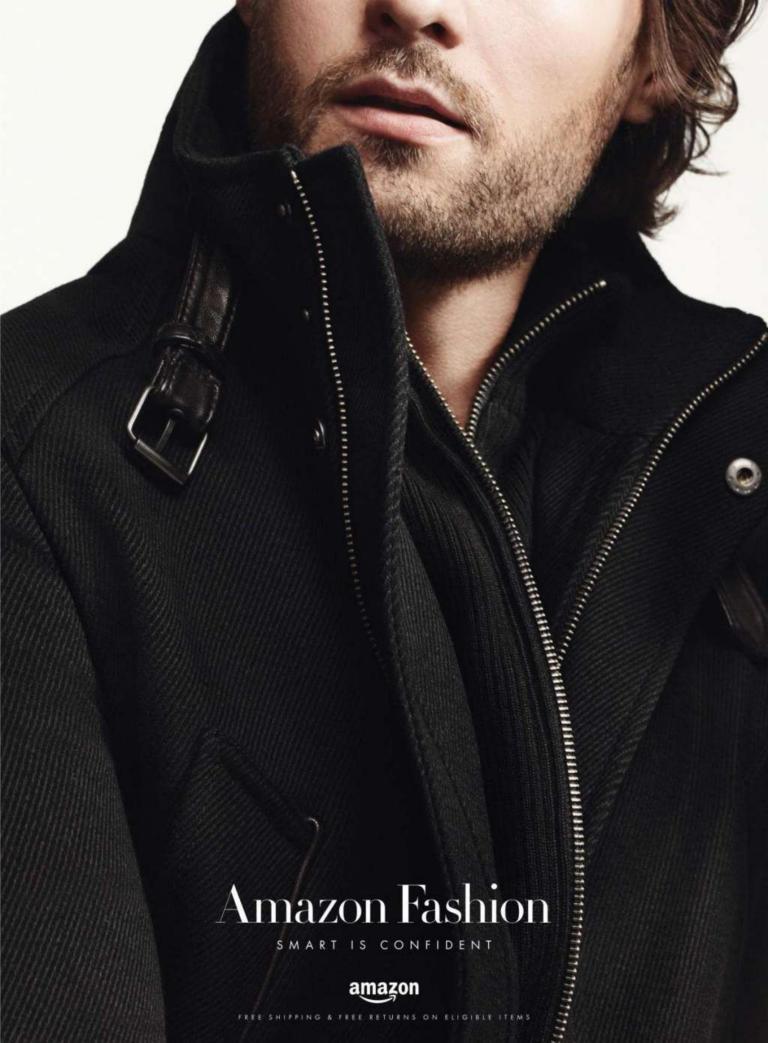
We grew to love the tonguein-cheek hyper-masculine character in so many recent commercials. (Most of them for beverages and body sprays.) But he's overstayed his welcome BY BYARD DUNCAN

174 Sneaker Wars

Adidas, for years the little brother to \$86 billion titan Nike, is coming for the king. MATTHEW SHAER reports on the footrace The Untold Story of the Texas Biker Gang Shoot-out

Two rival biker gangs, hundreds of weapons, and one breasts-themed restaurant deep in the heart of Texas. What could go wrong? BY NATHANIEL PENN

BOTTEGA VENETA





G. C.C.





On Michael B. Jordan
Suit, \$5,010, and Henley, \$670, by
Tom Ford. Watch by Frédérique
Constant. Bracelet by Cartier.
Necklace (Franco chain), his own.
Grooming by Johnny Hernandez for
Fierro Agency. Prop styling by Steve
Halterman for stevehaltermanstudio.
com. Photographed at The Rose
Room, Venice, California.
Produced by Steve Bauerfeind for
Bauie Productions.



On Rob Lowe
Suit, \$535, by Tallia Orange. Shirt,
\$295, and tie, \$190, by Burberry
London. Pocket square by Ferrell
Reed. Rings, his own. Grooming by
Johnny Hernandez at Fierro Agency.
Photographed at 72andSunny.
Location vehicles provided by
Quixote Studios. Set design by JC
Molina at CLM. Contributing stylist:
Kelly McCabe at Art Department.
Produced by Steve Bauerfeind for
Baule Productions.



On Ryan Reynolds
Suit, \$2,390, by Burberry
Prorsum. T-shirt, \$60, by Todd
Snyder + Champion. Watch by
Patek Philippe. Bracelet by
A.P.C. Hair by Kristan Serafino for
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42 GQ.COM OCTOBER 2015

Features

202 How to Eat Healthy(ish)

PAGE 2/3

We know what we're supposed to eat. And we know what we want to eat. Here, as if by alchemy, is where the two overlap

216 How to Be Good(ish)

Seventeen ways to smoke, give, ponder, live, and feel like a better human being

230

Stud: How to Have 106
Babies (and Counting)
Ed Houben is a sperm donor
who performs the real act,
no plastic cup involved. The
craziest part? It's worked
over a hundred times
BY MICHAEL PATERNITI

242

How to Get Away with (the Perfect) Murder

At first it looked like an unsolvable, masterfully executed crime. And as SEAN FLYNN shows, this shooting in the Alps might be so. It might also be just a random attack

The whites of this shirt and jacket could learn a thing or two from Michael B. Jordan's teeth.

Jacket, \$1,100, by John Elliott + Co. Sweater, \$770, and pants, \$1,290, by Tom Ford. Shirt, \$70, by Tommy Hilfiger. Tie, \$145, by Emporio Armani. Photographed at The Rose Room, Venice, California.

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Fashion

How to Arrive in Style: Michael B. Jordan

He's been on a rocket-like trajectory since he was a teenager on The Wire. Now he's carrying a feature as the son of Apollo Creed. Michael B. Jordan just keeps moving BY CHRIS HEATH

210-

How to Embrace Your Dad Years: Ryan Reynolds

Ryan Reynolds isn't a twentysomething hotshot anymore. He's a dadand he wouldn't have it any other way BY ZACH BARON

How to Re-Re-Reinvent Yourself: Rob Lowe

As Hollywood careers Rob Lowe's has been incredibly Hollywood, fro the Brat Pack all the way up to Parks and Rec. AMY WALLACE checks in with the father of the celebrity sex tape

How to Survive the Haters: Meek Mill & Nicki Minaj

Meek Mill has had a crash course in "When Rap Beef Goes Bad." But through it all, he and girlfriend Nicki Minaj canoodled on BY MARK ANTHONY GREEN

HOW TO...

198 **Learn to Dance** BY ROBERT DUVALL

Start a New Job BY JUSTISE WINSLOW 212

Be Handy BY WILLIAM H. MACY 225

Eat Without Sharing BY JIM GAFFIGAN

235 Survive on an Island BY SENATOR JEFF FLAKE

PAGE 3/3

Ryan Reynolds breaks the cardinal rule of

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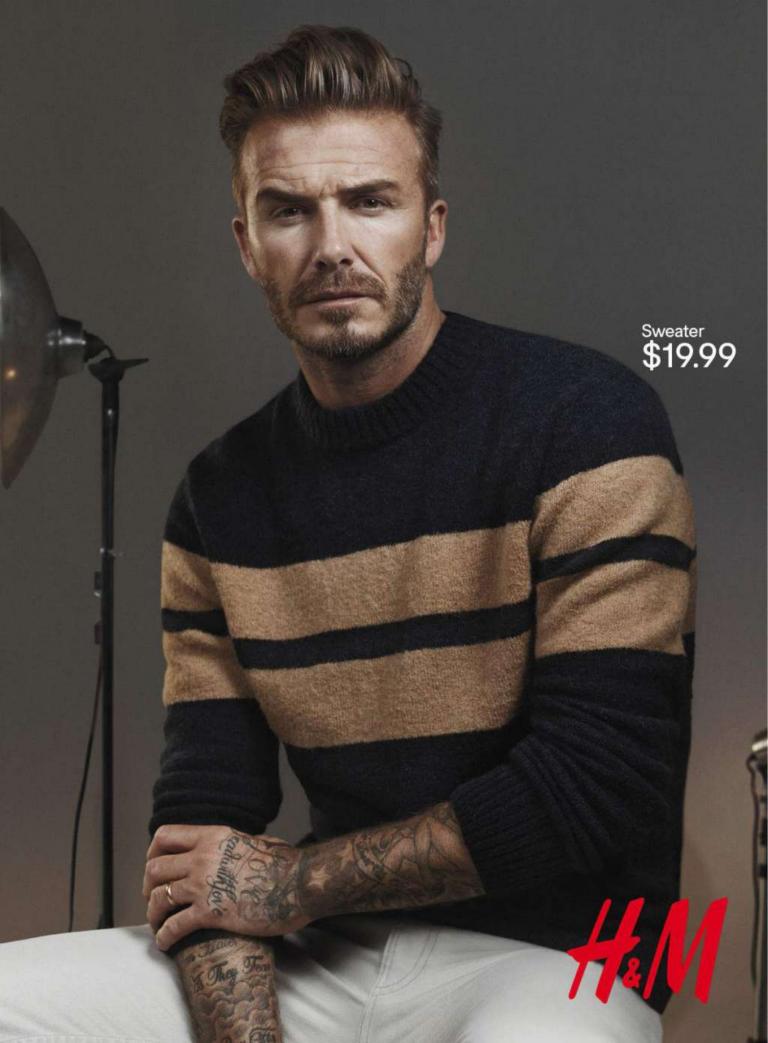
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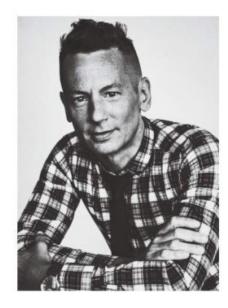
Trump Wall of Shame

WE'VE ALL LIVED WITH the Joke of Donald Trump for so long—the daffy, possibly amoral billionaire who reminisces about his favorite bankruptcies as "fantastic," the blowhard life-coach who doesn't really care about your life-that it's impossible to separate his essentially comedic persona from his new, more demanding role. Call it Lead Actor in a Performance Guaranteed to End in Tears.

Here's the thing. He knows it. Trump knows we can't quite separate the buffoon from the Contender, that our first thought is "Is he...serious?," and he knows this blurring is the key to everything. He doesn't want us to take him too seriously—that would leach all the fun we're having right out of this little ride, and force us to think about the kind of world we'd be living in if it ended the way he'd like it to.

I can still take most of it as a joke, and that's how I think most of it will end up. Except for one thing, what I'll call The Worst Thing He Ever Did: used the campaign-and every ounce of his unctuous charm-to revive a hateful idea that isn't funny at all. For years, it lived only on the political margins, somewhere on the far right of crazy. Until Donald mainstreamed the far right of crazy.

Now I'm left to wonder: How did it happen that adult American humans started entertaining the notion of building a wall, an actual full-size wall, like the sort you might find in a house or a dungeon, all across the long border with Mexico? (Even the concept sounds like a bad Trump sales pitch: Look, I can give you wall-to-wall continent!) And how did it happen that, soon afterward, other adult American humans, stimulated by the lively and dangerous conversation, said, yeah, we should talk about That Wall Thing, because we got us a problem? How did it happen



that soon pundits started taking That Wall Thing seriously, inasmuch as anything you hear in this clown campaign can be considered serious?

Trump has a perverse sense of timing, too (or no sense at all). In a year when we finally started (started!) to reckon with the long legacy and systematic practice of racial profiling, how is it that overtly racist mantras like "We need to build a wall!" and "They have to go!" were suddenly considered legitimate political discourse? Because really: What's the difference between that and hate speech?

Problem is, we should all have a problem with the "problem." Not with the bigger complaint that America isn't great anymore (wait, America is so not great anymore that... Everyone wants to come here?). But with the supposed root of the supposed evil. We have lots of problems, but undocumented workers pose no real threat to us-I'm sure there are fewer marauding Mexican "rapists" crossing our borderlands than there are presidential candidates-and deporting millions of people will do nada, literally nada, to make America great again, as Trump's hat likes to say.

But push a little deeper against the argument. What's the problem we're exercised about? Nobody doubts that we are living in an era of mass global migration, of desperate people

dying on boats and trucks, in Chunnels and deserts, doing anything they can to cross borders, chase jobs, and make a better life. If you want to be pissed off about that, fine, but then give a thought to what drives that desperation.

The darkest irony of all is that no one contributes to that situation more than guys like Donald Trump. Fat-cat plutocrats with First World hair who will proudly look for any loophole that gives them an edge in the global marketplace—who openly admit that they will do anything, including exploiting bankruptcy laws, if it makes their bottom line sweeter. These are the people whose businesses rely on a borderless flow of capital and cheap labor. And we're pissed off at the guys at the bottom?

I just got back from Israel, too, where building walls between people has done nothing to solve problems. It tends to make those problems feel more, not less, intractable. The only good thing that's ever come out of that wall is some Banksy graffiti.

Let's get back to that brilliant solution. This Wall: It's ludicrous, it's bad form, it won't work, it'll cost a fortune, it will engender ill will with one of our greatest friends and trading partners, effectively declaring a cultural war on Mexico. And it'll be uglier than a Trump Tower.

And you know what? We are never going to build a wall. We can't even agree to build a highway these days.

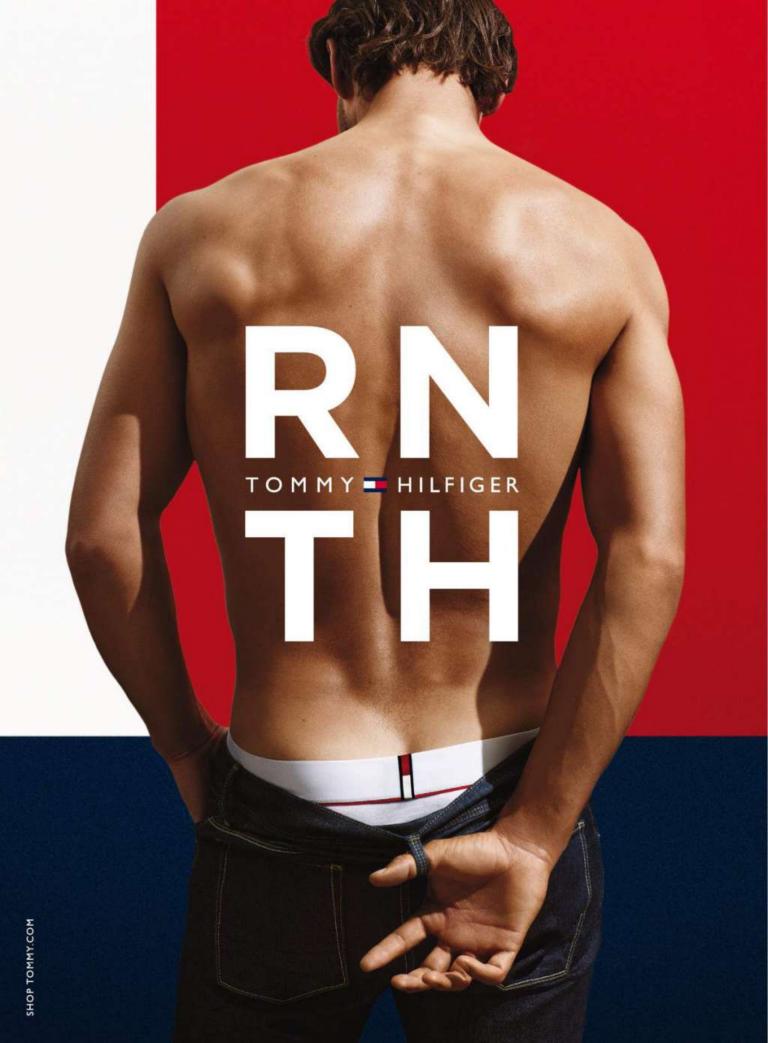
Republican candidates tend to fall all over themselves declaring their undying love for Ronald Reagan. (If the party could, I swear they'd create a perfect candidate, Donald McRonald Reagan, and he would reign forever.) Even Trump told Meet the Press the Reagan years were "the last time America was great."

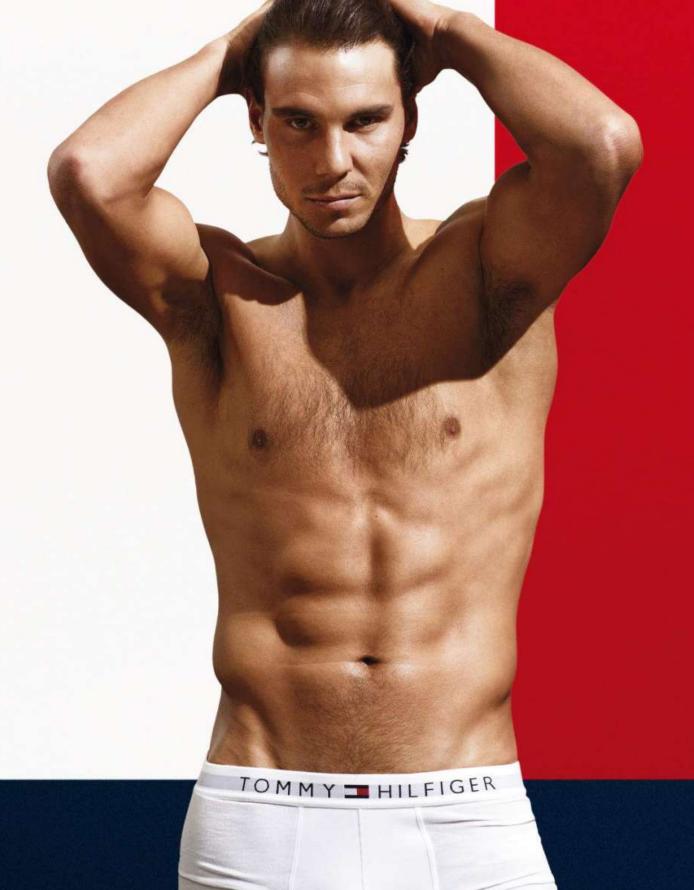
But I noticed that when the candidates started ranting about immigration, none of them brought up Reagan, one of the great wall haters of our time. ("Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall, bitch.")

So tear it down, Mr. Trump, and stop trying to make America hate again.

JIM NELSON

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

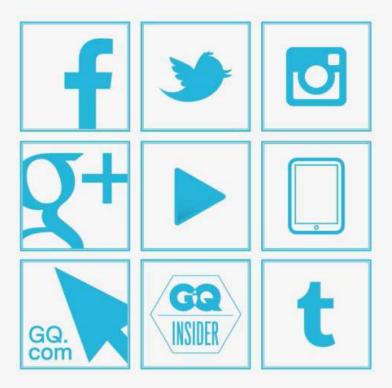




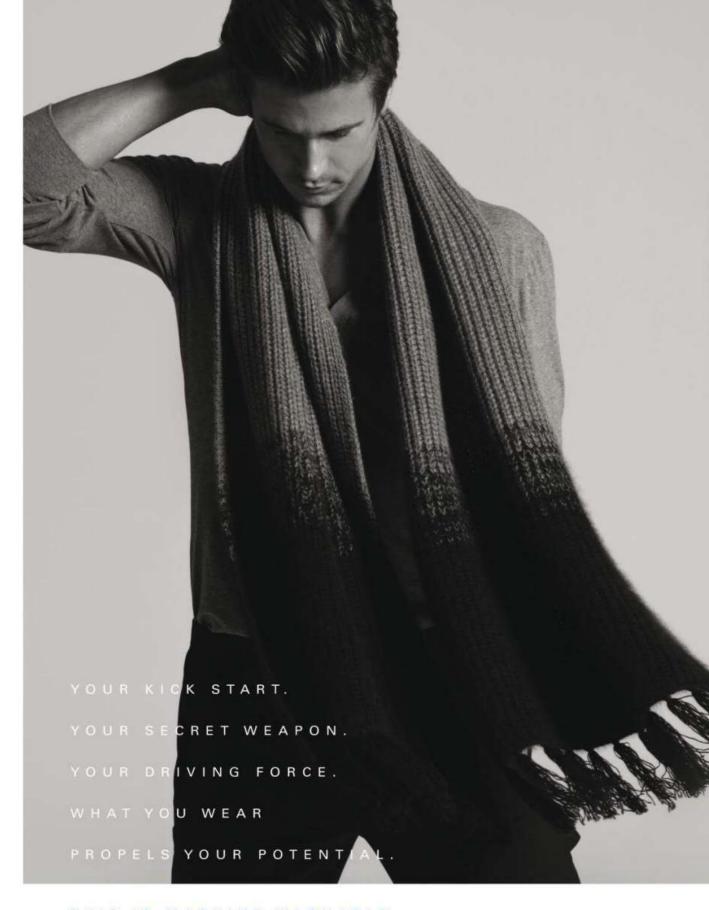
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G Q H Q

→ We've gone from a monthly to an all-thetimely. Here's the latest news from the ever-widening world of GQ

A Model Walks into an Office...

→ How do we find the newest, most stunning models? Through office visits known as "go-sees." Bookings director Victoria Graham started a models-only Instagram account (@GQ_Castings) so you can meet the women before you start seeing them on billboards, in advertisements, and in this magazine.







gq prefers that letters to the editor be sent to letters (2) gq.com. Letters may be edited.



Great Scott!

→ To tackle one of the biggest novels of the year, in hype and volume—City on Fire by Garth Risk Hallberg—for this month's Punch List (page 144), we called up A. O. Scott, a chief film critic for The New York Times and author of Better Living Through Criticism, out in February. We asked him: How would you describe reviewing a 944-page book under deadline?

"It feels like bingewatching a TV show. It's a luxury to lose yourself in a narrative and keep going with it for as long as you can, pausing to eat and sleep (and in my case, go to the movies). Writing about it in any coherent way is another matter. You can't really do justice to such a big book in such a short space, and you're not really issuing a judgment for the ages. You want to give readers something to talk about."



The Comedian Who Made Us Cry

→ Readers who thought they knew Stephen Colbert after almost a decade of The Colbert Report were blown away by Joel Lovell's beautifully honest profile in our September issue, particularly fellow journalists. They laughed, they cried, they tweeted.

This Colbert profile is no joke the most poignant thing I've read in months.

—Anne Helen
Petersen, BuzzFeed (@annehelen)

A nuanced, hilarious, and at times surprisingly sober look at the incoming Late Show host.

—Laura Bradley, Slate

This profile of Stephen Colbert is really lovely and moving and fascinating. —Josh

Gondelman, 'The New York Observer' (@joshgondelman)

The @lovelljoel Colbert piece should be referenced anytime a writer is told that the celebrity
profile is dead.
—Dan Fierman,
Grantland
(@fierman)

Well THAT'S
the first time a
@GQMagazine
article has made me
cry. Thanks for
ruining my mascara,
@lovelljoel.
—Ari Shapiro, 'All

—Ari Shapiro, 'All Things Considered' (@arishapiro)



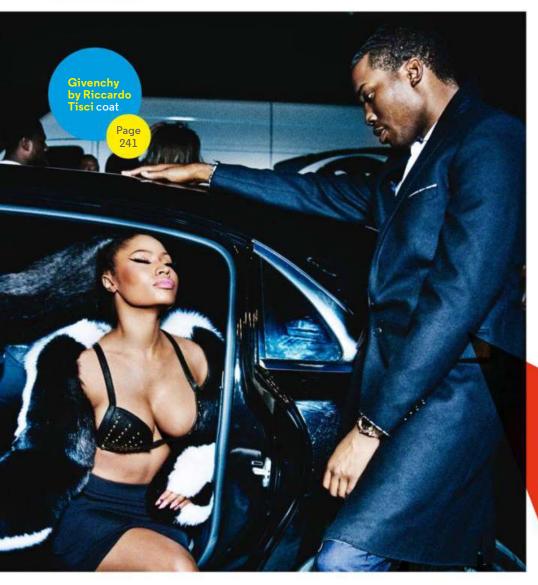
Keeping Up with the Kandidates → This election is more schlocky than the best/worst E! reality show, and GQ reporters will be watching both the stars and the audience: Political correspondent Jason Zengerle will be pressing candidates with the can't-lie-your-way-through-this-one questions, live-tweeting along the way, and correspondent Drew Magary will be rally-hopping, bringing you news from the voting masses. For a taste, go to GQ.com to read Magary's often hilarious reflections on a Trump rally in lowa in July. And follow GQ on Twitter (@GQMagazine) so you don't miss a single candidate's gaffe.





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Just a few of our picks from this issue...



Dolce & Gabbana henley p. 215



Balmain jeans p. 71



Orlebar Brown shorts p. 196



for all mankind

7FORALLMANKIND.COM



The Chelsea Boot, Rebooted

It was patented by Queen Victoria's royal bootmaker in the 1850s, then dusted off a century or so later by the Beatles and the Stones. Now the Chelsea boot just stepped firmly into the 21st century—with a little help from the likes of designer Hedi Slimane, Harry Styles, and Kanye, the face who launched a thousand menswear movements. No more pointy mod toes and buffed-to-gleaming black leather. Now the Chelsea's a casual I-just-yanked-this-on power move that can anchor a suit (turn the page, you'll see) or some slim beat-to-hell jeans. It's none of the Victorian fussiness, all of the rock-star swagger.—JIM MOORE

John Varvatos | \$898 | johnvarvatos.com





Laces Out!

Rock gods and royalty know there are a billion ways to slip into Chelsea boots. Maybe start with these foolproof four Walk a Mile in Their Boots Do as they wear, not as they do



Kanye West
• The self-declared
"number one
rock star on the
planet" has the
boots, at least, to
back it up.



Harry Styles
• With suit pants, you want no break (see left). With jeans, you want the denim to stack. Harry gets it right.



Lenny Kravitz
• These boots look like he's stomped, smoked, and screwed in them for years. (He has.)–S.S.









Which Way to Chelsea?

They're available in a dramatic range of styles and prices. But the pants must always be skinny

Penthouse Look, Basement Price

First pair? Go suede. Like baseball mitts and Keith Richards's liver, suede boots get better with hard use. Pair 'em with a knifesharp pinstriped suit.

Aldo | \$155

A Little Less Ringo

If you want to shine, try a burnished brown leather boot instead of the classic Beatle black. (But steal the boys' tailoring and peg them high on the ankle.)

Berluti | \$2,270

Looking for a Lift?

When shopping for Chelseas, always check out the height of the heels. More of a skyward stack means more eyes on you. That's not a bad thing. Own it.

Buttero | \$510

Wings for Your Feet

Did you know that Chelsea boots and wingtips are now having babies? Wear with cords for awed looks at the office.—SAM SCHUBE

Black Fleece by Brooks Brothers | \$898



Sometimes Your Shoes Need a Belt Maybe you've been pounding pavement in Chelsea boots for a while, and now you're hungry for whatever's next. Introducing jodhpur boots, the proper name for the strapped-and-buckled Chelsea variation at left. That it originated as a shoe for beau monde bros makes the jodhpur—when paired with broken-in jeans and a slight scowl—your route to street-style ascension.—S.S.

John Lobb | \$1,795 | Where to buy it? Go to GO.com/go/fashiondirectories



DSQUARED2





FIERNO





You don't have to set up a tepee in your backyard to get in on the 1970s Dennis Hopper movement that's currently doing wheelies through stylish men's wardrobes. This fall, all you really need is a bulletproof-thick, peyote-trippin' cardigan. Just know that this isn't the frat-jokey dreck peddled on UglyChristmas Sweaters.com. These are serious garments (thumb-sized zippers, graphics that have been in development for a millennium) that you're meant to wear less-thanseriously. Like as a psychedelic blazer. Or as the capper to an all-denim Allmans-at-the-Fillmore look. And as for actually doing peyote? We wouldn't know a thing about it.-SAM SCHUBE

Cardigan, \$825, by David Hart. Shirt, \$99, by Denim & Supply Ralph Lauren. Jeans, \$118, by Gap. Boots, \$750, by Ralph Lauren. Belt by J.Crew. Bracelets by Miansai. Where to buy it? Go to GQ.com/go /fashiondirectories

Your Cardigan

Just Dropped Acid

When the mercury dips, take your mom's advice and wear a sweater—then stop right there. These chunky, rightside-of-funky cardigans are all the jacket you need this fall

Outerwear for Everywhere

These dressed-up versions of drug rugs work anywhere, so long as you don't overthink things. Need proof?



They're perfect for a Brooklyn ayahuasca session...

Chamula | \$286



...or collecting healing crystals in Santa Fe...

Denim & Supply Ralph Lauren | \$145



...or downing a post-ski-slope scotch.

Granted | \$395

DWNINGTI BACK WITH A VENGEANCE, SEASON TWO OF FOX'S SMASH HIT EMPIRE IS SET TO DROP THIS FALL WITH A FULL SEASON OF MUSIC, INTRIGUE, AND DRAMA. It's King Lear in a hip-hop family as the three sons of Empire Entertainment music mogul Lucious PRESENTED BY Lyon battle each other in competition for their father's throne. The youngest brother in the

THE LINCOLN

MOTOR COMPANY

sibling rivalry is Hakeem Lyon, played by newcomer and music prodigy Bryshere Gray (pictured

here). He sees Jamal, the soulful songwriter with enormous artistic ambitions, as his strongest

competition. But not to be underestimated in the fight to the top is their business-minded eldest brother, Andre (played by Trai Byers), and his ambitious wife, Rhonda (played by Kaitlin Doubleday).







THE MUSE



The all-new Lincoln Black Label MKX, pictured here in The Muse theme, features a Rouge Noir leather-wrapped steering wheel and is enhanced by an artisan aluminum accent.



Gracefully contoured seating surfaces in Quartz Venetian Leather, created from only the top 1% of hides, with a tuxedo stripe in the center, represent the luxury at the core of the all-new Lincoln Black Label MKX.



The expertly engineered Revel® Ultima System features three unique sound modes—Stereo, Audience, and On Stage—evoking the feeling of a live music experience.

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SEIZE THE POWER

As events unfold in season two, Lucious is in prison and Andre aligns with his mother Cookie and her allies—making a desperate attempt to seize control of his father's company. And as the Lyons continue to battle each other, external threats emerge...

Don't miss the all-new season as the most dynamic show on television returns with more music, jaw-dropping fashion, opulent interiors, and unprecedented drama.

Empire

WEDNESDAYS SEPT 23 FOX

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Announcing the GQ 100

>The Best New Stores in America

While making our list of the country's top shops for GQ.com—a.k.a., the GQ 100—we found so many in unexpected places. Ready to feel envy, New York?

1 of 2





Supply & Advise

Miami

If the idea of shopping in Miami brings to mind buying half-price Speedos, SPF 6 spray tanner, and a gently used speedboat once employed by a cocaine mule, you're going to be shocked by this multi-level paradise of approachable style. Supply & Advise sits downtown, away

from be-thonged South Beach, and the owner, Jonathan Eval. moved from New York City. We're not saying that his pedigree is what makes the store one of our new go-to's, but that does explain why its restrained take on men's clothing-Supply & Advise is packed to its slim-fit gills with labels like Engineered Garments. Gant Rugger, Unis, and Alex Mill-can feel so fresh down here in the land of glistening pectorals.

More than that, Supply & Advise has nailed the smile-andthen-some service delivered by the best menswear stores on either coast. Want a cocktail while you try on a customtailored suit and some last-a-lifetime Alden wingtips? Coming right up. (Try the Aviation.) Soon, Supply & Advise will even custom-tailor your hair in its very own barbershop. The store's part of an up-and-coming neighborhood pegged as the city's antidote to Collins Avenue douchery. We're taking back Miami, starting now. -LIZA CORSILLO

NEW ORLEANS Big Easy Style Just Got Easier



NOLA boasts style meccas like Meyer the Hatter and haberdasher George Bass, but what if you don't dress like Louis Armstrong? Stroll into **Friend** for labels like Saturdays and APC, which'll keep you fresh even on the city's swampiest days.—L.C.

MINNEAPOLIS

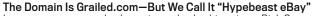
The Midwest Is a Growth Market



Sometimes good enough isn't enough. Owners Eric and Andrew Dayton left the original **Askov Finlayson** shop for larger digs—the better to showcase coldweather-ready brands like Norse Projects and the brothers' own made-in-the-U.S.A. line, plus the city's first Warby Parker outpost. Pop by the old shop, though—it's now a café.—L.C.







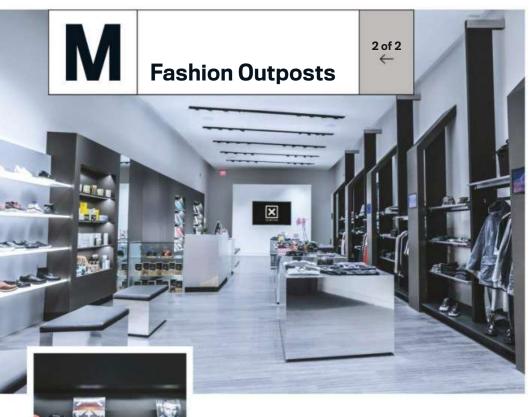




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A STORE FIT FOR THE KING

Xhibition

Cleveland

As a styleminded guy from the Midwest, I know the story too well: Maybe there's one clothing store in town that gets it-and that's best-case scenario. Cleveland, the land of LeBron and rock 'n'

Maybe snag some cerebral stimulation with your new kicks? roll superlatives, just welcomed Xhibition, a joint that gets it. All of it.

Behind the futurefun-house showroom is a store that shimmies along the tightrope between high-concept and no-nonsense, without ever plummeting into the trying-too-hard abyss on either side. If you need to re-up on everyday staples, pull some Baldwin denim, John Elliott sweats, and Comme Des Garçons off the racks. Or make the

kids on the corner jealous with streetwear labels like 424 on Fairfax and a pair of Adidas x Raf . Simons sneaks. Or just hang out, waiting for a Cavs player to show up and burn off a paycheck. Because what Xhibition doesand what big-city boutiques never can-is double as a clubhouse for every guy in town who also gets it. That's the kinda feeling that can make a Midwest boy proud.

-MARK ANTHONY GREEN

LOS ANGELES Tailoring in an **Untailored Town**



The suiting desert that is Los Angeles finally gets a cup of water now that Naplesbased Isaia has planted its first U.S. flag in Beverly Hills. Try a soft-shouldered, boldly patterned jacket-and stop by the in-shop Campari bar if you need a little liquid courage. - SAM SCHUBE

CHARLOTTE, N.C. Throw Away Your Computer



Hey, Charlotte men, you can shut down your browsers. **Tabor,** a whitewashed 1920s house filled with all the menswear covetables you were once forced to buy online, finally opens this month. Enjoy actually trying on your clothing!-S.S.

THE REAL GATHERING OF THE VIBES

Shiprock Santa Fe

Santa Fe

> A few years back, you couldn't walk into a cool new restaurant, hotel lobby, or apartment in America without feeling like a pirate lost at sea: It was anchors, sails, and salvaged wood everywhere. Now a new aesthetic is taking over: an unlikely mix of Native American textiles and midcentury-modern furniture.

The epicenter of this new look is here at Shiprock, on

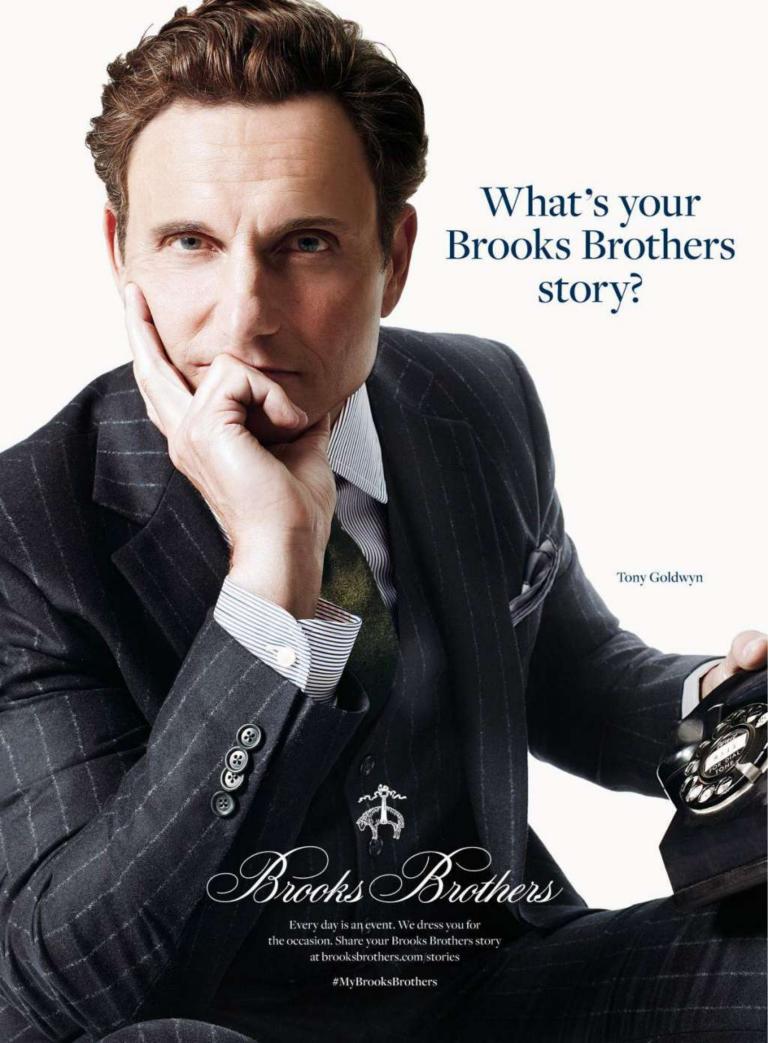
the second floor of a corner building in Santa Fe, where fifth-generation Native American trader Jed Foutz hangs authentic late-1800s Navajo blankets on a wall above 1950s French armchairs. There's also a gallery for modern art, plus a room dedicated to the Wild West-obsessed menswear label from Japan, Visvim.

Strange worlds crash together here, and Foutz has the bona fides to pull it off. He spent his childhood working at his father's reservation trading post, stocking shelves, buying livestock, and working with local artists. And an early entrepreneurial streak had him selling Native American

jewelry to Robert Redford (for the Sundance catalog) and then Ralph Lauren-both the label and the man. Now Foutz is dedicated to helping Shiprock pilgrims see why a vintage handwoven Navajo piece belongs inside a two-bedroom downtown apartment stocked with Eames chairs.

"I'm like, Are you kidding me?" Foutz says. "This is the base of modern art. This inspired Max Ernst. It inspired Warhol, who was a collector. Then you think that the woman who weaved this had no exposure outside of a 60-mile radius her whole life. A dirt floor. A kerosene lamp. It's a sense of design that is elemental and powerful." Shiprock is the place to tap in.-JAY CARROLL





What's your Brooks Brothers story?

"MY VISIT TO THE WHITE HOUSE ... I FELT APPROPRIATELY PRESIDENTIAL WHEN I GOT TO ACTUALLY MEET THE PRESIDENT."



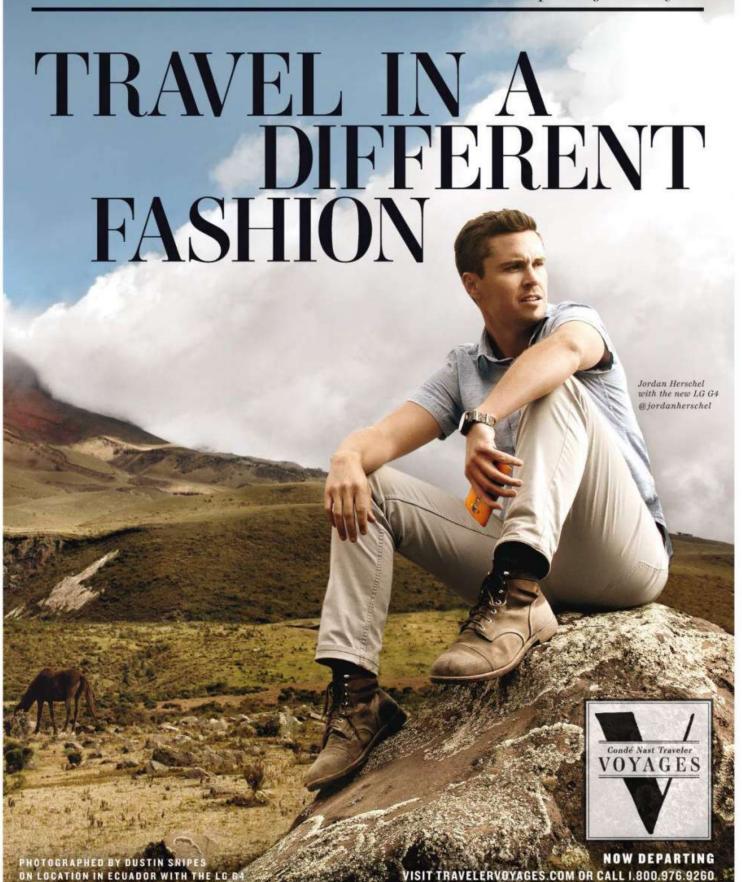
Every day is an event. We dress you for the occasion. Share your Brooks Brothers story at brooksbrothers.com/stories

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Clean Up Your Junk Drawers

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Do your undies bunch in an unsightly manner? Do they squeeze your precious cargo? Does she ask "Are those... vintage?" when your pants come off? If you suffer from any of these issues, we have a solution.

First, get on the gray scale. Gray flatters all body types and skin tones, unlike nowhere-to-hide white or quick-to-fade black.

Second, diversify your drawers. You should own a couple of sports-centric pairs that keep your plums in place during a workout (like Calvin Klein's let-'em-breathe mesh option) and at least two full weeks' worth of comfortable everyday undies. Then treat yourself to something suave, like the Frenchified

trunks from Le Slip Français—the kind that look good on you and *great* on her bedroom floor. —BENJY HANSEN-BUNDY

Clockwise from top:
Le Slip Français...\$32
Lacoste...\$28
Calvin Klein
Underwear...\$32
Dolce & Gabbana...\$145
Jockey (two-pack)...\$20
Where to buy it?
Go to GQ.com/go
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M

Labels We Love

The Off-Center Cool of Off-White

Meet Virgil Abloh: mastermind of fashion label Off-White, creative director for Kanye West, favored DJ of the global style set—and the role model for a new class of millennials who are allergic to the idea of a desk job

A decade ago, every scrappy young kid orbiting the music industry with a heart full of hustle and a head full of rap lyrics wanted to be a CEO, like Jay Z or Diddy. Today they all want to be a creative director. Well, really they want to be Virgil Abloh.

Abloh is Kanye West's consigliere, facilitating Yeezy's never-ending stream of projects. He DJs. He collaborates with musician friends like Sky Ferreira and Theophilus London. And in 2014 he launched Milanbased fashion label Off-White. In just five seasons it's gone from being dissected by streetwear-forum geeks questioning Abloh's design cred to a nomination for the prestigious LVMH Prize for Young Fashion Designers. And it's evolved from a fresh but overstuffed fashion concept to a streamlined collection that hovers in the sweet spot between the street and the runway. It's also become the first thing people mention when they drop Abloh's name-and people are dropping his name a lot these days.

"My design team is myself," Abloh says. "I look at Instagram all day and travel and text with friends." When I ask about his evolution from streetwear collector to fashionworld buzz machine, Abloh says, "I liken streetwear to disco. When it was popping, you couldn't tell anvone disco wasn't the new rock 'n' roll. But it didn't age that well. Streetwear lived and it died. Now our generation is taking its ideas and mixing them with high fashion-an Hermès or a Givenchy. We're bringing something new to the table.'



Abloh is often surrounded by friends-slash-mentees like Heron Preston (left) and Luka Sabbat (right).

To make it all happen, Abloh lives in the sky and works from WhatsApp on his iPhone. When asked about his recent travels, he strains to remember: "Three red-eye flights to L.A.," he says. "Before that... I think I was in Japan?

Definitely Korea. Paris for sure. And a trip to the office in Milan for, like, two days."

Tor, like, two days.
The continenthopping is central to
Abloh's allure. Just as
wearing Ralph Lauren
conjures a life spent
between a Madison
Avenue office, a
Hamptons manse,

and a Colorado ranch, wearing Off-White says you log your time between airport lounges and VIP sections, hanging with models and rappers, making shit happen. "This became my lifestyle by accident," Abloh says. "Trying to avoid

a day job by having ideas. Thirty ideas a day."—WILL WELCH

Clothes by Off-White c/o Virgil Abloh.
Where to buy it?
Go to GQ.com/go
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• He DJs at clubs and fashion parties.



• And is Kanye's right-hand man.



• First Jay Z repped Off-White onstage.



• Then the fashion world bought in.



• Now kids want to grow up to be Virgil.

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The GQ Style Guy

Is the suit dead? And when it comes to fur, what would Broadway Joe do? GQ's style guru, Mark Anthony Green, answers all that and more



What's the rule on leaving chest buttons undone on a dress shirt? One? Two? Three? There are no hard rules in style. (Except one: Deep V-neck tees are the worst thing you can possibly wear.) It all comes down to what you're trying to get across. **Buttoning your** shirt all the waya.k.a. the air tieis contemporary. Gosling would approve. One open button is conservative. The difference between two open buttons and three is simple: How suave are you feeling? The afe play is two... but Tom Ford would go three.

I was given a have never worn it because, well, it's tweed. How do I wear it without looking like a geezer? » Is the problem that you can't get with tweed... or that the jacket actually feels old? Plenty of designers are making killer tweed blazers that look very 2015. But if yours feels stuffy—if the lapels are too wide, if the cut isn't slim enough, if the shoulders are boxy or the color is 1972 beige-the problem isn't the tweed. It's the jacket.

Is the business suit dead? I see it being worn by fewer "stylish" guys nowadays.

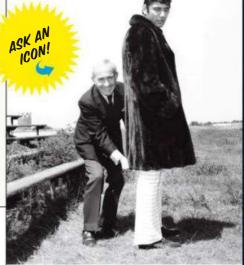
James Brown went to prison for stealing suits. Gay Talese said a suit elevates a man's spirit. Hell, before most people at *GQ* learned my name, they knew I looked sharp in a suit. In 103 percent of all surveys of the fairer sex, when asked what's most attractive on a guy, women pick the suit. Point being: Suits will always be option one in a man's weekday arsenal—and now their role outside the office is expanding. Lately I've been wearing one on the weekends, just to break from the pack. But if you've graduated from Charcoal-and-Navy Suiting 101, maybe suit up a little louder? I've got my eye on a teal Calvin Klein two-piece that will hopefully elevate my soul *and* attract the future Mrs. Style Guy.

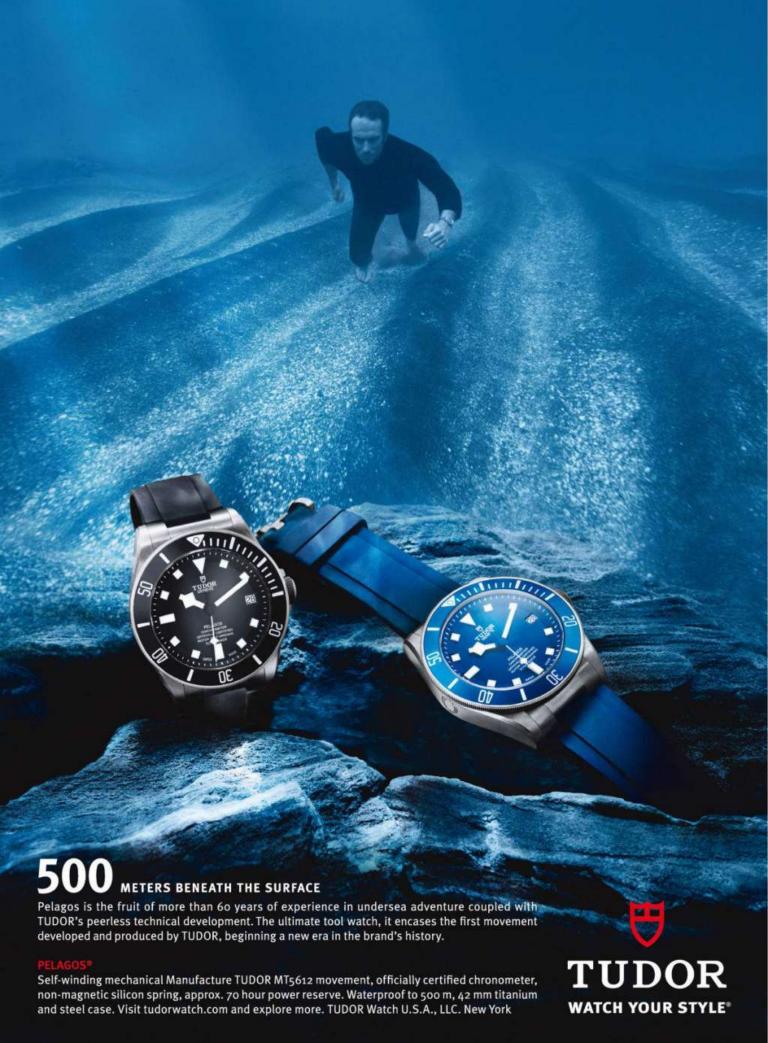
The GQ Style Guy is in! Send questions to styleguy@GQ.com or @GQStyleGuy.

Can any guy pull off a fur coat?

I used a lifeline here and called Joe Namath, the fur-coat GOAT. He's got the answer.

Prior to my pro career, I didn't have a fur coat. But wearing one was like wearing white football shoes for me, or a Fu Manchu mustache. Things were happening in New York City, and I was playing it the way I felt comfortable. The key is that I still got my job done. If I couldn't have produced on the field, then who would have cared?"







Get S#!t Done



Work Hard, Nap Harder

We've all experienced the post-lunch energy crash and continued groggily toiling at our desks. But science says we'd be better off taking a work nap—that's right, literally lying down on the job—and Andrew Blackwell knows just how to snooze without waking up to a pink slip

I was dozing on the floor of an empty office when a co-worker popped through the door.

"What are you doing on the floor?!" she said, alarmed, as though I were having an aneurysm.

"I'm taking a little nap," I said, stretching. "You know that." This had been my routine for months: eat lunch, announce that I was going to take a nap, and then lie down under a desk.

"But..." She struggled for words.
"I thought you were joking."

Nope. Roll your eyes and mouth *Yeah*, *right* if you must, but napping

at work is not a joke. The CDC has declared insufficient rest "a public-health epidemic," and sleep science tells us that naps make you both healthier and happier. They make you less vulnerable to disease. They make you age more slowly. Gentlemen, they make you more virile.

Science *also* tells us that people who nap at work perform better. A classic NASA study found that pilots who napped for 20 to 30 minutes were 100 percent more "physiologically alert" than their non-napping colleagues and had 34 percent fewer performance lapses. Well-napped workers bring far more energy and enthusiasm to their tasks than if they follow standard afternoon practice, which is to stare listlessly at their computer screens for an hour before slinking off for another cup of coffee.

Of course, siesta-taking Spaniards have known all this for years. And some progressive American businesses are already clued in. The company where I work provides dedicated napping rooms (I assume they're also great for pumping breast milk and weeping about impending layoffs), and yet I've met colleagues who, after years in the building, are still afraid to go near them. "I'm scared someone will see me coming out of there," they say. Even in my blessedly nappable environment, I am a lone napper in a wasteland of non-napping zombies—much like Charlton Heston in *The Omega Man*, only better rested.

I can understand the reluctance to crash al desko. You worry that the most hackneyed clichés about sleeping on the clock—that you're lazy, that you're wasting company time and money—will stick to you, staining your good name as though you'd just popped up on a sex-offender registry. You'd rather *appear* hardworking than take the counterintuitive step toward real results. But you have science on your side. And capitalism, too.

Your employer's benefits far outweigh the time "lost" while you're sprawled on the company sofa/bean bag/conference table. The research is overwhelming: Short naps make you more productive and make your bosses more money. Once they realize this—if they have any fiduciary loyalty to their stockholders—they'll be rushing to deposit their employees into nap pods and onto reclining massage chairs. But first someone has to teach them.

Armed with the knowledge that your daily nap is essential to your employer's bottom line, you can now implement this three-point plan of attack:

- 1. Secure a perimeter. Most workplaces have some kind of nappable space, whether a little-used meeting room, the backseat of your car, or the office of the guy who took last week's buyout. Be creative.
- 2. Leverage your post-lunch slump. Early to mid-afternoon is the ideal time for work naps. A half hour should be plenty and will keep you from waking up foggy. Bring a hat or a hoodie you can pull down over your eyes—or a sleep mask, if you're a true believer.
- 3. Engage in psy-ops. Keep the napping itself out of sight (no one needs to see that), but admit to it freely around the office. Your colleagues will begin to see you as a model of efficiency. As you win allies, work your way up the chain until management recognizes the staff's collective performance gain.

Workers of America, it really is this simple. Stand up, take a deep breath, and boldly say the magic words: "I'm going to take a nap."

The rest will follow.

ANDREW BLACKWELL is the author of Visit Sunny Chernobyl.

After Hours > How to Get into the Best Clubs (and Maybe Even Leave with the Prettiest Date)

Club-going is a glossy *oontz-oontz* minefield: What to wear? Who to bring? Does bottle service make me look douchey? (Not entirely.) The duo behind every superstar's favorite New York late-night party spill secrets on how to run the room



As with any club worth its velvet rope, getting into N.Y.C.'s Catch-a better-thanit-should-be restaurant (try the ceviche rolls) with a rooftop allnight chill space up above-means getting past a guv at the door. And if you do, many splendors await: On a good night (which is basically every night), guys like Leo and Jeter are living large while staring out at a sea of stunning women. If only Eugene Remm (in the blue suit) and Mark Birnbaum, the two thirtysomething late-night magnates who opened Catchwhich spreads to L.A., Mexico City, and Dubai this year-could usher you through, you wouldn't have to worry. So here's the next best thing: their game plan for winning over the bartender. owning the room, and maybe even getting her number (assuming Leo doesn't ask for it first).-MARK ANTHONY GREEN

PER CONTRACTOR OF STREET O

Start with the Tip Mark: Always open a tab. Tell the guy you're going to be buying drinks from him all night long. And it's not a bad idea to tip at the beginning of the night. That way, when things get crowded, he'll be looking to take care of you because you already

took care of him.

Say No to Sparklers Eugene: If you're doing bottle service, less is more. Pay for the real estate so you're comfortable, but don't overdo it.

Mark: You'll probably get more respect by not being that guy who buys stuff for no apparent reason.

Nothing Andrew Jackson Can't Fix Mark: Any problem you have, like getting in or getting a table, can usually be solved with \$20-or \$100, depending on where you're going. Just don't be rude about the handoff

You Can Bring a Winglady...

Mark: Always come with a pretty girl. It's the easiest way to get in.

Eugene: I've noticed it's also the easiest way to get the attraction of all the

it's also the easiest way to get the attention of all the women inside. And it gets the attention of everyone who works there, too.

...But Leave the Wingtips Behind Eugene: The best style accessory you can wear on a night out is a great haircut. Shirts, jackets— whatever—can be overlooked. But a great haircut is the smartest investment a man can make. Mark: And high-end sneakers!

The Smoother Move Eugene: Offer to buy her a drink. If she accepts, you have 20 minutes, max, to get her to see something. Mark: And if she's with a guv and vou're not sure what their deal is, mouth over: Royfriend? If she says no, you know she's interested. If she says yes, whether it's true or not, you saved some





Want the corner table? Bring a Jackson...or five.

2
The hardest part of having so many pretty women at Catch:
Which one do you send a drink to first?

Your office wingtips are too serious and your Nikes are too chill. High-fashion sneakers were created for standing on couches and dancing.

\$780 | louisleeman.com







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David Chang's Kitchen



"And Did You **Leave Room** for Dessert... Next Door?"

News flash: The restaurant pastry chef is dead, a casualty of American dining becoming more, well, casual. The silver lining? A bumper crop of incredible bakeries, patisseries, doughnut joints, and specialized dessert temples all over the land. **Chef Chang picks his sweetest spots**

You might have noticed that there are more and more amazing bakeries, pie shops, and chocolatiers popping up. (Though not fast enough if I'm still waiting in line 30 minutes for a great croissant.) You might also have noticed where those pastry geniuses aren't showing up anymore: in restaurants.

The sad fact is, there are fewer and fewer of these chefs around. The reasons for this stretch back decades, to a time when the traditional French restaurant was the apex of fine dining-hell, it was synonymous with the phrase "fine dining."

Every great French restaurant needed a great pastry chef. The cuisine demanded ornate, intricate desserts that could only be made by especially welltrained people.

The position came with more freedom, schedule-wise, but it yielded little fame, especially when measured against the dedication required to reach the heights of the profession. As I've built my business over the nast decade-plus. I've watched cooks weigh the decision of whether to join the pastry trade-the knowledge and skills they'd need to master, the lower return on

investment-and most chose to do something else.

In America, it's possible to trace this devolution to a specific moment: when Jacques Torres left **Le Cirque** to do his own thing. Since Jacques showed the way, it seems like every "next Jacques Torres' gets younger and younger. These kids are opening their own shops earlier than ever-which makes sense when the kitchens interested in cultivating that talent are disappearing left and right. Last year we lost wd-50, truly a bastion of creativity and technique, where dessert wizards like Alex Stupak, Rosio Sanchez, Sam Mason, and Milk Bar's own Christina Tosi all once worked. At this point, restaurants that employ full-time pastry chefs of this caliber are so rare that they're almost nonexistent.

That's a shame, but it's led to a creative revolution, a diaspora of awesome bakeries (and other sweetshops) run by pastry chefs who have worked at the very best restaurants. My first bite of kouignamann-that's a round crusty cake invented by the Bretons-at b. Patisserie in San Francisco told me that the people who baked it could only have honed their technique elsewhere.

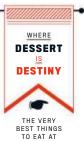
(This was, of course, true. Belinda Leong worked at Manresa; Michel Suas started baking at 14 back in France.)

The truth is, fewer of us go out to long formal meals at places that need a pastry department where young cooks can learn the ropes and the building blocks of fine pastry. Most of us would rather bounce around to a few different places than spend all night at one: a drink and a snack here, dinner over there, dessert down the block at Arcade Bakery or Stick with Me Sweets (both in N.Y.C.) or Mindy's Hot Chocolate in Chicago. I'm certainly guilty of this. Choice in dining can be a wonderful thing.

As with so many things that are changing in the food world. it's a glasshalf-full/half-empty situation. It's great for most people and shitty for some, mainly critics and holdouts clinging to the final vestiges of old-timey fine dining. But don't worry, dinosaurs. Pastry chefs aren't quite extinct-they've just evolved and switched habitats. (See: ex-Jean-Georges pastry guru Johnny luzzini's new plan to open a chocolate factory, shop, and café in the Catskills.) So call for the check and find a place where the dessert menu is the only menu.







CHANG'S FAVORITE

SPOTS



FEDERAL DONUT PHILADELPHIA

Their cinnamon-brown-sugar doughnuts are all about the temperature (hot) and texture (light and fluffy).



HOT CHOCOLATA CHICAGO

All the cookies are incredible, but who doesn't crave a simple Christmas cookie with peppermint and chocolate?



B. PATISSERIE SAN FRANCISCO

This kouign-amann is flaky and buttery, with perfect caramelization. Best I've ever had.



STICK WITH ME

N.Y.C.

The bourbon-maple-pecan bonbon is classically addictive, with just the right hint of bourbon.





FALL 2015 Bleecker Chrono in navy MACY'S coach.com



Travel









 $1 \text{ of } 3 \rightarrow$

How to GTFO of Town...Tomorrow

We're willing to bet there's not a nine-to-fiver in America who doesn't fantasize about dropping everything at a few hours' notice and spending the weekend somewhere wild. Silicon Valley's made it easier. All you need to decide: Do you want to go near, far, or as far away as possible?







The rooftop party at Casco Viejo's Tántalo Hotel...

...and some of Tántalo's delectable Panamanian grub.

The Biomuseo, on the nearby Amador Peninsula.

The lobby bar at American Trade Hotel is waiting for you.



Panama: The Shortest Path to an Exotic Land

BRING YOUR PASSPORT AND NOT MUCH ELSE

>> You've had a crap week-month?-and you want to get out of Dodge. But flights to the South Pacific are four figures, minimum, and the transatlantic time change is too much of a commitment. Enter Panama: Hiding in plain sight for years down there at the tip of Central America, it's cheaper and closer

than you ever knew. And it's a very good time to visit.

Meanwhile, it's a very good time to get out of Dodge. With all the new travelsimplifying services and so many damn places that you can get to so easily, taking that last-minute leap to a distant locale has never been simpler.

Now, sure: You need some cash lying around. (Don't despair if you're budgeting-we've got you covered on the next two pages.) Good news: Tickets to Panama are only about \$500 from both New York and L.A. And the geniuses behind Ace Hotel, tucked inside the city's graffitied old town, run a spot there that makes you feel like a 19th-century sugar magnate. Check in. You'll figure out the rest when you get there.-MARK BYRNE



Download Before Touching Down

HOTEL TONIGHT An app that'll get you deals-good ones—on lastsecond hotel rooms.

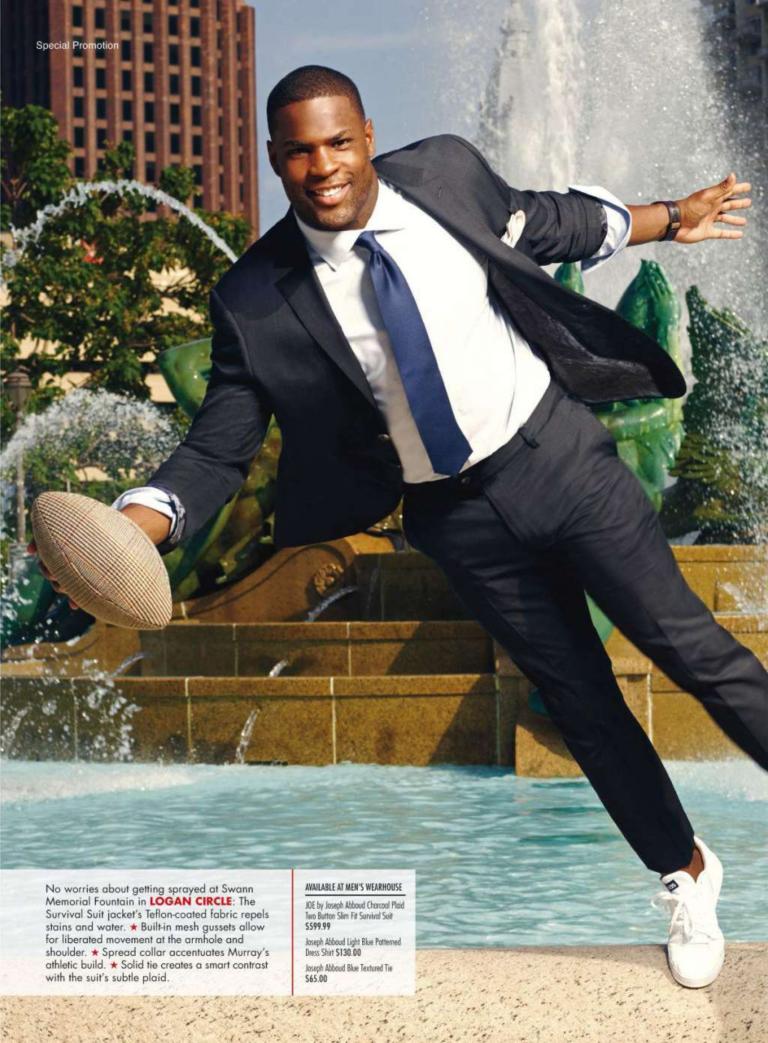
TINDER PLUS Costs 20 bucks but allows you to scout out distant locales. Set up a date while navigating the TSA line.

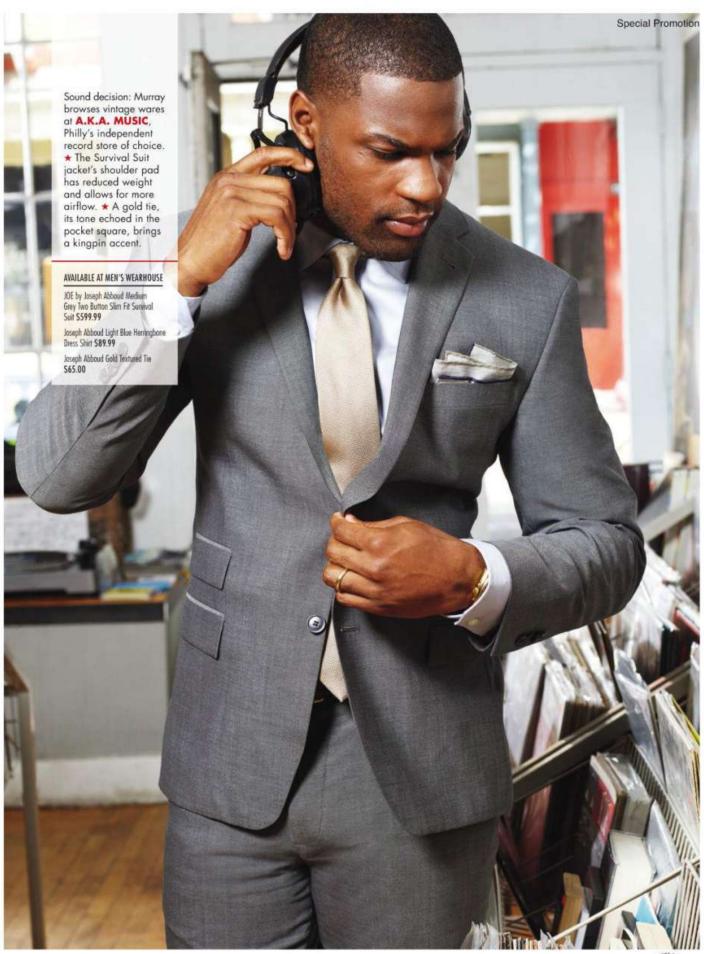
WHERE CHEFS EAT The best places to fuel up in any given city? Wherever the chefs do. This \$15 app is your in.

USTRATIONS BY CRUSCHIFORM TOBER 2015

FROM TOP LEFT: DAVE LAURIDSEN; BALL & ALBANESE; DAVE LAURIDSEN; COURTESY OF SPENCER LOWELL/AMERICAN TRADE HOTEL













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Travel

Leave Town Tomorrow

2 of 3 ->



Say No to the **Big-City Weekend**

...BECAUSE MIDSIZE METROS KNOW HOW TO PARTY



Okay, a lastminute, let's-go-nuts escape has you thinking about a major city. New York? L.A.? Maybe Miami? But they're too big—too unwieldy for firsttimers; too much potential FOMO even if you've been before. No, what you want for this long weekend of freewheeling (and free-boozing) fun is a medium-big, midcountry metropolis. One that'll hug you at the door, then send you home Sunday with a pat on the ass and a couple of aspirin for the hangover.

We're talking towns like Dallas (a surprising southern art scene),

Denver (for a true Rocky Mountain high), Nashville (shop hard, rock harder), New Orleans (pictured, land of carryout daiguiris and free-range brass bands). You can get a feel for these places fast, and the locals won't gawk at outsiders so much as point you to their favorite bars. Also key: Flights are fairly cheap, and the airports run with a startling, machinelike smoothness. (Take note, JFK.)

So which city? If you're stumped, download the Songkick app, which scans your music

library (including Spotify listens) and spits back your favorite bands' tour schedules. There: Now Saturday night's covered.-JON WILDE

Dinner is served at a crawfish boil.

Hit New Orleans on any given Saturday and you will not want for live-music options.

City size is key to a weekend escape. You should be able to tackle a good chunk of the downtown in a couple of days. Good public transit helps.



A Fast Trip Needs an Unfussy Bag



When you're on the ground and can't abide bulging pockets.

Porter \$249 eastdane.com



Think of them as racing stripes designed with the race down the terminal in mind.

Uri Minkoff \$350 | uriminkoff.com



No shoulder pain; no more overhead-bin battle. Ahh.

Rimowa \$525



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Sometimes you need to know how far away your budget can take you, and in these moments, Google Flights is your new friend. The site maps destinations, complete with the cost of airfare. Just find a locale where the right price-to-intrigue ratio catches your eye. There goes any excuse for another staycation.







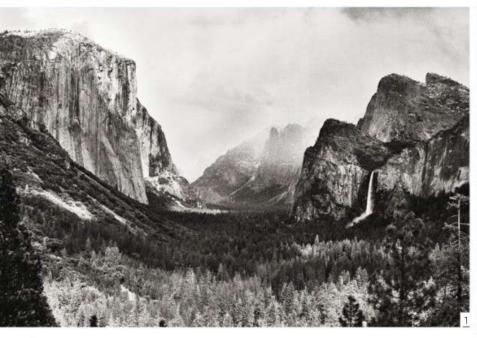
Toyota Corolla | toyota.com/corolla



Travel

3 of 3 ←

Leave Town Tomorrow





How to Relax Your Road Trip

EDGE OF THE MAP, YES, BUT NOT OFF THE GRID

For reasons both universal and personal, you need to clear your head. Which is why this perspective-buying breather from everything IRL starts with a drive. Aim for one of America's unruined expansesthat valley/mountain/ national park you've long sworn you'll visit, roughly two to three hours away. Plug the name into Waze's free nav app and select the most scenic route. You're no longer in a rush.

Bear Grylls types and ex-Marines can opt for camping, but no shame if you book an Airbnb instead—an A-frame cabin is basically a tent with a shower and power. And as much as this trip is about clearing your mind and forgetting to-do lists, that phone in your pocket can help.

Pack a case of your favorite beer and a Bluetooth speaker like the UE Roll (\$99). Before you pull out of the driveway, do three things on your phone: Save your favorite streaming playlists offline to counteract mid–Father John Misty signal loss. Download AllTrails—hiking is your path to clear head space,





and this app knows the closest, best trail. Finally, follow these steps: Settings > Notifications > Off.-M.B. The much-needed antidote to the view from your cubicle.

Some national parks and forests, like Yosemite, have both ready-made campsites that you can book (cheap) and houses you can rent on Airbnb or VRBO (chill).

This is the exact type of vista that you want, except much larger in size and not printed on a piece of glossy paper.

Text Your Regrets! How to Cancel Any Plans

Will you be at the 2 pm oversight meeting?

Hi [sir/ma'am], I had to fly home to assist with urgent family matters and will be working remotely. I've briefed [semi-competent, non-threatening co-worker].

BAE

Dinner tomorrow still?

Hey [cutesy term of sndearment], I've been so cooked from work that I bolted town for a few days to clear my head. Back Sunday night, and made a rezzie at [better restaurant than before]. In?



Can't

Ode on a Lightweight Travel Jacket

Dear stylish packable windbreaker,

Thanks for saving our asses when the rain starts, despite our weather app displaying a sun. Thank you for being there when our girlfriends get cold on the plane. And thanks for reminding us that scrunching a man-sized jacket into a tiny bag is immensely satisfying. SINCERELY, GQ





Big Bang Unico Italia Independent.

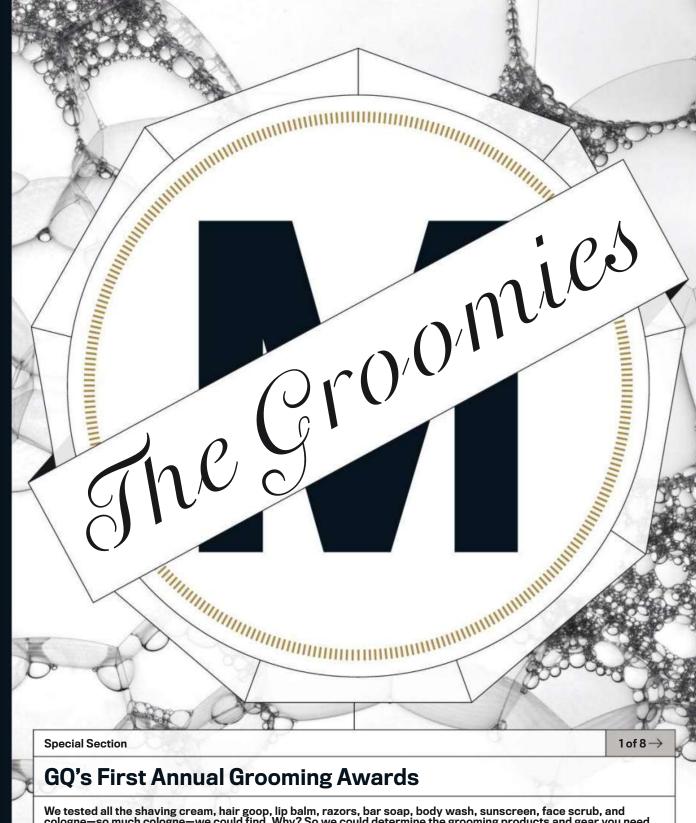
Designed in collaboration with the Italian brand. UNICO column-wheel chronograph. In-house Hublot movement. 72-hour power reserve. Case crafted using a carbon fiber and aluminium alloy developed exclusively by Hublot: Blue Texalium. Blue jeans straps with studs stitched to black rubber. Limited edition to 500 pieces delivered with sunglasses made with the same materials.



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We tested all the shaving cream, hair goop, lip balm, razors, bar soap, body wash, sunscreen, face scrub, and cologne—so much cologne—we could find. Why? So we could determine the grooming products and gear you need to clean up, smell good, and become a modern man's man—you know, the kind that ain't afraid to use eye serum





The First Ever DRY SPRAY ANTIPERSPIRANT

FROM AXE°



GOES ON DRY, KEEPS YOU DRY WITH NO VISIBLE RESIDUE



2015 GQ Grooming Awards

First, Put Your Best Face Forward

No more eye bags and dry brow. Here, a night-and-day blueprint for your freshest face

2 of 8

WINNERS





Clinique for Men Face Scrub

To de-gunk those forehead creases, you're going to need grit. This scrub digs into pores without taking off too many layers of skin.

\$21, clinique.com



Kiehl's Facial Fuel SPF 15

You should be wearing sunscreen every day. Kiehl's makes it easy: The low SPF means you'll get a little color, and it's less oily than most.

\$35, kiehls.com



Ernest Supplies matte moisturizer

Skin a little slick? This is what you want: non-greasy and non-smelly. The packaging travels well, including in your briefcase.

\$25, ernestsupplies.com



(Night



Recipe for Men Under Eye Patches

If you're hungover, or overtired, or tired of being overworked, a 20-minute session with these patches will fight off the zombie.

\$36 for three, recipeformenusa.com



Clarisonic Alpha Fit

You know that book that prescribes getting rid of as many belongings as possible? Clarisonic's skin scrubber is the same idea, but for your face.

\$189, clarisonic.com



Taun Facial Repair Formula

This moisturizer with retinol—an unsexy word for an anti-aging form of Vitamin Aworks the skin-repair graveyard shift.

\$79, taunskincareformen.com

THE FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD GROOMING MECCA Spruce Apothecary

1022 W. Burnside St. Portland, OR spruceapothecary.com

• IT MAKES NO SENSE that we're awash in an unprecedented wave of design stores and homeware shops, yet the easiest place for guys to buy grooming products is still the fluorescent-lit drugstore. The guys who run Portland design shop Canoe had that thought, too, so they opened Spruce Apothecary. Same level of obsessive curation as the mother ship-note the very old Spanish soaps and the very modern under-eye treatments—only it's applied to making your face sparkle. If you're not in Trailblazers territory, Spruce is online, too. And don't worry, drugstores: You're still our man for 3 A.M. contact-lens solution.





Fire-breathing is for Burning Man attendees. Get that Tom Cruise glint with this lineup

3 of 8

EAU DE BOUCHE

Luster Smile Illuminator kit

After those gummy strips left us with barely whiter, intensely sensitive teeth, we swore off tooth-whitening devices. Until Luster's three-part pain-free process—a toothpaste, a rinse, and a serum—made us look like we'd never touched a cup of coffee. (Or red wine. Or bourbon. Or...)

fresh mint

NET WT 2.6 oz (74g)

\$18, lusterpremiumwhite.com

Philips Sonicare HealthyWhite+ toothbrush

You can buy pricier electrics with useless gimmicks. You can buy cheaper ones that look (and clean) like toys. But the HealthyWhite+ has Sonicare's bone-deep scrubbing action—without anything that'll confuse you at 2 a.m.

\$120, sonicare.com

Marvis Eau de Bouche mouthwash

A mouthwash without much alcohol? you ask. Yup. But can it freshen? Sure does. How? With xylitol and propolis, which means Marvis's swish won't burn like Listerine yet somehow still leaves your mouth feeling twinkly clean.

\$22, cobigelow.com

Rembrandt Deeply White toothpaste

No toothpaste can really erase heavy stains—that's for the dentist. So between deep cleans, this is how you keep teeth pristine: a toothpaste with the whitening power (thanks, peroxide) to beat back your half-caflatte-and-blueberryscone habit.

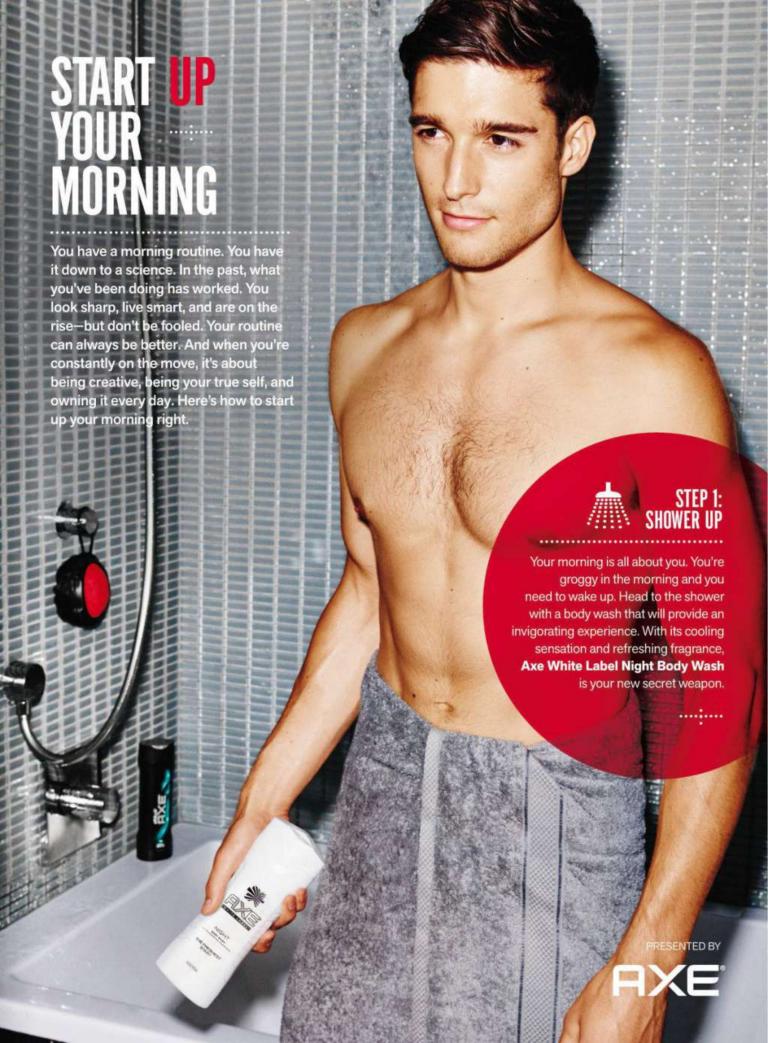
\$21 for three, rembrandtboutique.com

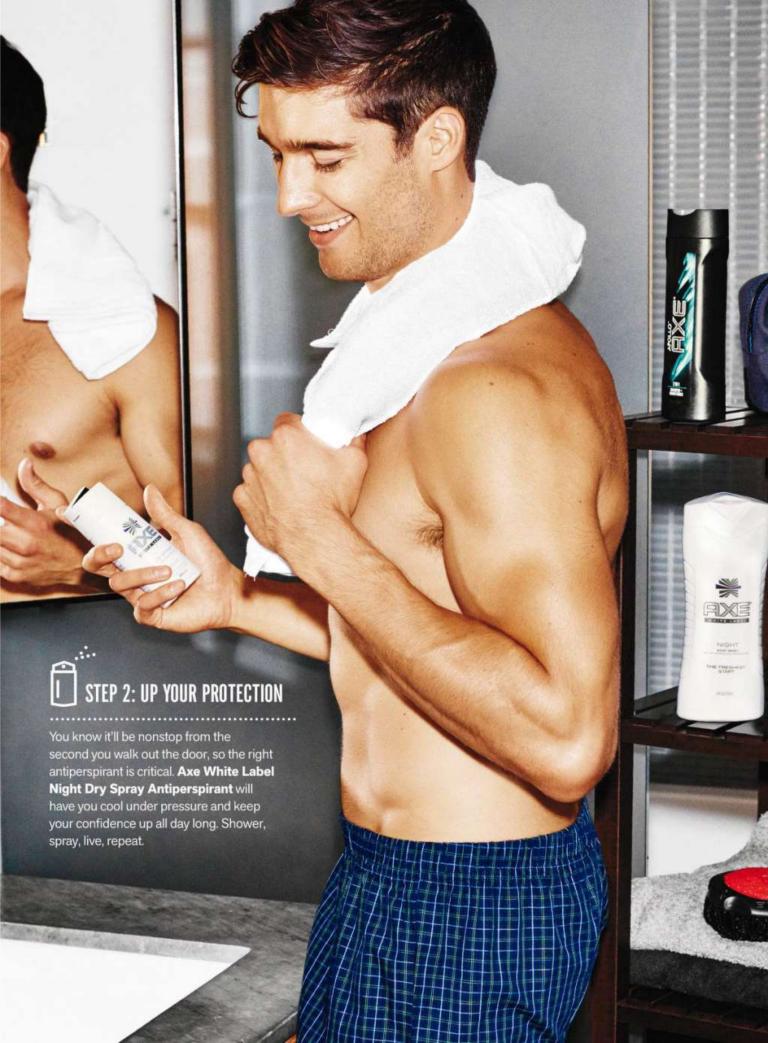
> Jack Black Intense Therapy Natural Mint lip balm

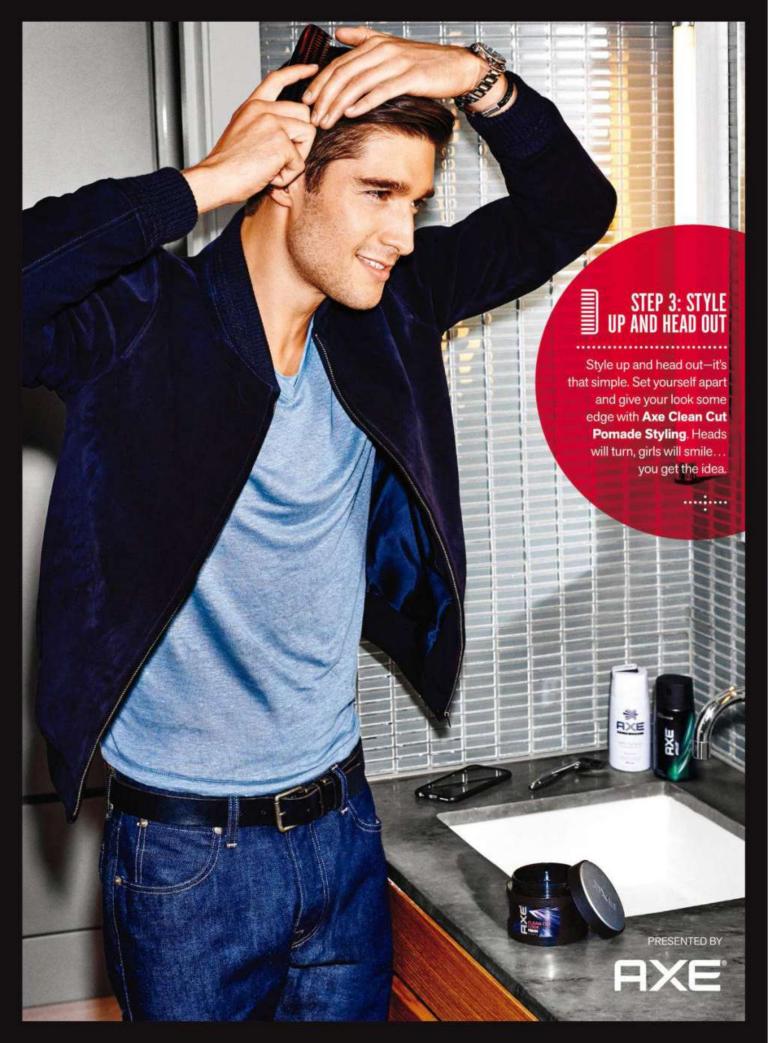
Smells so good you'll want to eat it. But you're not a toddler, so you'll just appreciate how well it smooths your sandpaper lips without irritating them.

\$7.50, getjackblack.com









JPGRADE

- 1: AXE WHITE LABEL NIGHT BODY WASH Formulated with refreshing fragrance to give you a clean like no other.
- 2: AXE WHITE LABEL NIGHT DRY SPRAY ANTIPERSPIRANT Instantly dries with no visible residue for the protection you need.



3: AXE APOLLO DAILY FRAGRANCE Smell great all day with this fresh fragrance that combines sage, crisp mandarin, and smooth sandalwood,



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 Pull off that classic look with ease and achieve medium hold and polish without looking wet.



5: AXE APOLLO 2 IN 1 SHAMPOO

+ CONDITIONER Your hair will thank you for being so clean, soft, and great-smelling.

THE **ESSENTIALS**

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3



2



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3



'Do the Right Thing



Hair to the Throne

-> Game of Thrones' Nikolaj Coster-Waldau chopped off his mane last year and still wins GQ's first-ever Best Hair of the Year award. The podium is yours, Nikolaj....

"I have to say, I don't spend much time on it. This is not something I ever expected, but my hair and I are incredibly honored."

The honor, though, actually belongs to Coster-Waldau's Scandinavian genes, says his groomer, Érica Sauer Dulley: "Nikolaj has a great thick head of hair. He's lucky." Not so blessed? Dulley recommends taking biotin, a nutrient that supposedly beefs up hair strength and thickness. No guarantees it'll help your acting, though.





The Elevated

TELL YOUR BARBER: > "Keep it short on the sides with clippers. Leave it at least two finger lengths long on the top." THEN USE THIS: > Work in some Mr. Natty Clay when your hair is dry or a little damp-never sopping wet. Form the part from back to front, starting at your natural cowlick and combing everything to one side.

\$27, mrnatty.com







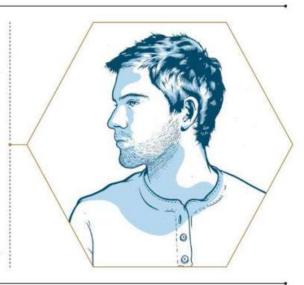
The "I Woke Up Like This"

TELL YOUR BARBER:

> "Use the pointcutting technique,
shears perpendicular
to my head. Add
texture with a
straight razor. Leave
the top longer."
THEN USE THIS:

> Boogie's Smart Hair
Paste brings just
enough hold to add
some shape. Use a
quarter-sized amount
and burn your comb—
you won't need it.

\$10, dollarshaveclub.com







The Combless Bradley Cooper

TELL YOUR BARBER: "I want it exactly this length." Point to where you want your hair to end, somewhere midway down the nape of your neck. Now let him go to work. THEN USE THIS: > Fellow Barber Styling Cream is texture in a tube. Cream gives the loosest, laziest hold, meant to keep your locks from looking like tumbleweed.

\$22, fellowbarber.com





2015 GQ Grooming Awards

Sweat the Technique

Muggy summers, desert-dry winters: Here's how to keep your various sweaty parts in check all year long

5 & 6 of 8

Shower of Power

Those five minutes under the spray (or 25-we're not judging) are where you get your headand your hair-in the game



American Crew conditioner

You don't need conditioner every day. But what most men forget is that you do need it. American Crew's is the ticket: It's minty fresh and washes out cleanly without weighing down your locks.

\$12, loxabeauty.com



Das Boom Body Brick

Exfoliation is important, but we're not exactly rushing to buy a loofah. Enter Das Boom's soap sponge: all the scrubbiness your skin needs, with soap built right in.

\$22, dasboomind.com



Dove Men+Care Clean Comfort soap

Dry skin? This hits that elusive bar-soap ideal: a not-too-fragrant full lather that gives a deep clean without sucking out all your skin's precious moisture.

......

\$10. drugstore.com



Axe White Label Night **Body Wash**

Contrary to the name, it's not just for nighttime, and it doesn't smell like the Axe you're used to-it's less high school freshman, more citrus fruit. Toss the bottle in your gym duffel to beat back the locker-room bouquet.

\$4, drugstore.com



Lab Series Age Rescue+ **Densifying Shampoo**

Some shampoos dry out your scalp with their harshness, but this one cleans without taking a heavy toll on your head.

\$29, labseries.com



Baxter of California Deodorant

Natural ingredients like chamomile and witch hazel mean you don't have to worry about yellow pit stains; the citrusy scent means you don't have to worry about stinking up the joint. \$18, baxterofcalifornia.com



Comfort Zone Tranquility Body Lotion

Most guys ignorefoolishly-the skin below their necks. All they need is the perfect moisturizer. This Italian amaranth-oilbased one smooths the skin better than a sauna shvitz. \$36, bigelowchemists.com



L:A Bruket hand lotion

No, we didn't know what meadowfoam and comfrey were before we found this Swedish lotion. But now we do: They're downright magical ingredients that'll nurse your dried-out paws back to health. \$26. labruket.se



Degree Men Adventure Dry Spray

Sprays, popular around the world, are gaining traction here at home, and we couldn't be happier: The nozzle dusts your pits with a fuller coat of sweatchoking, smell-blocking antiperspirant than you get with a stick. \$7, cvs.com



Anthony No Sweat Body Défense

It's a magic version of talc that goes on like a cream before alchemizing into swamppreventing powder. And it's fully edible, in case you're wondering (or she's worried) \$20, anthony.com



C.O. Bigelow Tea Tree Oil

The fact is, your feet are prone to going fungal-especially on those days you forget your gym shower slides. A few drops of teatree oil is the all-natural way to prevent a visit to Dr. Tinactin. \$10. bigelowchemists.com





 \bullet Ever think there was a "best" way to apply your antiperspirant? Us either, until we heard a very weird rumor: that you're supposed to roll on (or spray) your pit-protector of choice before you crash for the night. Weirder still: It's completely, factually true. An antiperspirant's pore-clogging powers require a few hours to take full effect. Waiting until morning means you're risking a bad case of the commuter sweats. If you worry that colleagues are judging your afternoon pit stains, imagine what the barista's thinking.

M

2015 GQ Grooming Awards

A Much Smoother Three-Step Shave

This is all you need for your gentlest, easiest shave (or trim, or beard tune-up)

7 of 8 →







Simplehuman Sensor Mirror

This magnifying mirror lights up when you get close, so you can clearly see that unibrow you should tweeze and those neck hairs you always miss.

\$200, simplehuman.com

Your Shorn-to-Shaggy Facial-Hair Tool Kit

These days, it's not uncommon for a guy to spend a week with a beard, then two months with perma-trimmed three-day stubble, and then a stretch with a job-interview-appropriate shaved face. So stock up: Start with The Art of Shaving's Unscented Shaving Cream (\$25), or try Blackbird Shaving Oil (\$28)—it's like a moisturizing, lubricating, seethrough shaving cream. Calm down angry pores with Harry's aftershave (\$8), with natural ingredients like licorice root. And when you're ready to beard up—on a weeklong vacation, or just for rec-league-playoff juju—grab some Proraso Beard Oil (\$16), so your hair-covered jaw doesn't have to hibernate without moisturization.

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\$13, gillette.com

Bevel shaving kit

Bevel's solution for razor bumps: an Apple-pretty safety razor (less irritation) and automatically shipped refills of the kit's creams and balms (less time at CVS).

\$30/month, getbevel.com

Wahl Lithium Ion beard and stubble trimmer

Beard man, eh? Here's the longlasting, quickcharging, walletrespecting face groomer that'll keep you from approaching mountain-man territory.

\$40, wahl.com



Panasonic LT7N electric razor

For the guy who can tap snooze on his iPhone without even opening his eyes, the most agile electric razor is your running-late, speed-shaving savior.

\$200, panasonic.com





Whether you're an early riser for work or play, having the right men's body wash when you hit the shower is integral to starting the day feeling fresh. Haven't found the winning body wash yet? Enter DOVE MEN+CARE EXTRA FRESH BODY WASH, the ultimate everyday choice with an ultra light formula that hydrates for healthier, stronger skin.

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STEP 2

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You've showered and need an antiperspirant that is going to help you keep your cool no matter what the day brings. Because DOVE MEN+CARE is tough on sweat, but not on skin, you'll get long-lasting freshness without the underarm irritation that can be caused by powerful antiperspirants. The skin-friendly EXTRA FRESH ANTIPERSPIRANT will help you keep your cool-for 48 hours, in fact.







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DOVE MEN +CARE **FORTIFYING** STYLING GEL is the move. Trust us, it's the key to a more resilient style, no matter what your hair goes through. It's the best decision you'll make-this morning at least.

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- 4: HYDRATE + FACE LOTION Dove Men+Care Hydrate Face Loton has SPF 15, which provides you the skin protection from dryness that you need in order to take on the day.
- 5: DEEP CLEAN + FACE SCRUB Exfoliating will help to avoid ingrown hairs and keep your skin looking clear.
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- 7: VASELINE MEN FAST ABSORBING LOTION Thanks to micro droplets of Vaseline jelly, you'll be able to brave the elements without taking a beating.
- 8: EXTRA FRESH BODY AND FACE WASH It's dermatologist recommended and hydrates for healthier, stronger skin.
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7



2015 GQ Grooming Awards

Smell Like Your (Better) Self

You're no longer limited to "musky" and "aftershave" in the cologne world, thanks to these smart scent-makers





FOR THE VINYASA GUY Aësop Tacit

The company that brought you high-design hand wash steps into the scent game with this surprisingly herbal (is that basil? but, like, in a good way?) scent. It'll add some serenity now to another day crammed with meetings.

\$110 | 1.7 oz. | aesop.com



FOR THE TAILOR-ON-SPEED-DIAL GUY Ermenegildo Zegna Mediterranean Neroli

Neroli's a bitter-orange essential oil, which sounds like a bad thing—until you realize that it's the olfactory equivalent of two pre-dinner Negronis. Which is to say: wonderfully bracing.

\$200 | 4.2 oz. | zegna.com



FOR THE WEEKEND-IN-MIAMI GUY Givenchy Gentlemen Only Intense

Lots of dudes seem to think that a nighttime fragrance ought to be cranked up to 10. Givenchy proves it knows better with this peppery, woods-heavy scent. Subtlety is its own reward, gentlemen—in life, and especially in nightclubs.

\$92 | 3.3 oz. | sephora.com



for the weekend-in-santorini guy Dior Sauvage

Beach by day, beach by night, beach by moonlit skinny-dipping—this one (with fresh bergamot and a lab-derived version of ambergris—yes, like from whales) has got you covered.

\$72 | 2.0 oz. | dior.com



FOR THE "NOT MY FIRST HELICOPTER RIDE" GUY Dolce & Gabbana Velvet Exotic Leather

They call it Velvet Exotic Leather for a reason. It's simultaneously soft and masculine, like the motorcycle jacket we keep telling you to buy (and break in over 20 years).

\$225 | 1.7 oz. | saksfifthavenue.com



FOR THE "REPAIRS HIS OWN MOTORCYCLE" GUY Polo Supreme Oud

Oud is the smoky wood extract that's blown up in the world of fragrances. Leave it to Ralph to take an often extreme scent into deeply wearable American-guy territory.

\$125 | 4.2 oz. | ralphlauren.com



What Charlotte McKinney Wants You to Smell Like

Hint: Not at all like 2015's breakout model A man's scent, to me, is so important. I don't want you to smell like me; I don't want to smell like you. I prefer something fresh and natural smelling. And less is more. It's not so much spraying shit all over you—it's that manly—man quality of not having to overdo it."



Axe White Label BODY WASH



FOR A FRESH, INVIGORATING CLEAN

• Legend, starring Tom Hardy and Tom Hardy as real-life gangster twins • Steve Jobs, the 4,387th movie about the man. But this one stars Fassbender! And Rogen! And Winslett . The Last Witch Hunter, Scouts Guide to the Zombie Apocalypse, and Pan, 'cause this isn't Tween GQ

10/15

GQ.COM 137



How you'll feel about Crimson Peak will

depend largely on

whether you've seen

Pan's Labyrinth, del Toro's genre-busting 2006 breakthrough. If you have: Crimson

Peak is a bit of a

but with plot twists you can spot from

across an ocean. If

you haven't: Crimson Peak is like nothing you've ever seen, so

who cares if you can

see where it's going? Plus, it's got a crazed

Chastain flinging

scrambled eggs at basic bitches, and

that's plenty. —DEVIN GORDON

sumptuous



MAYBE, if you're a two-time Oscar nominee — like Jessica Chastain, you see the value of

keeping your life ultra-private. All the better to

disappear into your characters, right? Like

the two she plays this month—a quietly bold

commander of an expedition to Mars in Ridley Scott's *The Martian*, and the unhinged hostess of a haunted mansion in Guillermo del Toro's *Crimson Peak*. Or maybe, if you actually are Jessica Chastain, you have no trouble opening up about loneliness and the bearable burdens of Hollywood fame. In role after role, from a badass CIA analyst in *Zero Dark Thirty* to a brutality-friendly wife in *A Most Violent Year*, she's been showing off a hard-nosed intelligence and straightforward toughness that's had us suspecting she's delightfully authentic in real life. We were right.

-DAVY ROTHBART

Life on Mars

GQ: As a kid, did you ever dream of being an astronaut?

Jessica Chastain: Not as a kid. It wasn't until I did

Interstellar and was around Christopher Nolan that
I got interested in space exploration. The more
I learned about it, the more it actually lit a fire under
me to want to do it.

You can! Have you heard about Mars One?

That's the one where people are applying to go to Mars? Yeah, I was absolutely fascinated watching some of the videos of people submitting for consideration, so earnestly expressing this desire to do something kind of crazy and travel for years for what's basically a one-way trip.

There's a nobility to it.

We're all explorers. We've climbed the highest mountains and explored the deepest waters. Maybe our lives feel bigger by exploring, claiming land, and conquering.

What surprised you most about prepping for your role in *The Martian*?

How everything with NASA is about "the team." In the movie, I'm playing a commander, but I learned that missions have little hierarchy. No one is barking orders. Every single person in a crew is crucial, and no

Best supporting actress in The Help; best actress in Zero Dark Thirty.

Like Apollo 13! Except even farther in space, Matt Damon, in full Ocean's Eleven charisma mode, plavs a charming astronaut: Chastain plays his commander and potential savior after he's stranded on Mars. The film is old-fashioned in its drive to maximally entertain you. Plus, Ridley Scott's direction looks both almost physical: space you can touch ZACH BARON

one feels lower down the chain than anybody else. Things run more like a family than a military unit.

Did anything about the film itself surprise you?

That Matt Damon plays a botanist astronaut—that was really surprising.

Life on Earth

You've talked about how your role in Crimson Peak gave you a chance to explore loneliness. Did you draw on any personal experience?

Theater people are lonely until they find each other. In middle school,

I remember feeling alone all the time. Kids would always want to do things that were not fun for me. I'd rather have been doing something creative. There was a failure to connect. You can imagine, I was pretty miserable.

How were you able to break free from that?

When I finally joined the drama club, I was like, *Ahhh, I'm not alone anymore.* And it was thrilling. I'd found my people, and my life changed completely.

What do you make of the darkness in Guillermo del Toro's work?

It always comes from a relatable human emotion, like loneliness or love. There's never sadistic violence or horror just for the pleasure of suffering; the darkness is always for something greater.

When you're doing a really intense scene, do you ever get freaked out? Does it take a while to come down?

In *Crimson Peak*, after this really emotional scene, Guillermo yelled "Cut!" and came over to talk to me about something, and I found myself sobbing a bit. My voice was still quavering. I had to be like, "Okay, hold on a minute," until I could calm myself down enough to talk to him.

When was the last time you cried?

Most of the time when I cry it's because I'm happy, or I've seen something really beautiful. About a month ago, I went back home and I gave my grandmother a gift that she was really happy about.

Can I ask what the gift was?

[really long pause] Well...I bought her a house!
[laughs] I surprised her; she had no idea. We pulled
up to it and she was like, "Where are we?"



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> Special thanks to Julianne Moore, the 2015 Ambassador for the Entertainment Industry Foundation, Stand Up To Cancer and Saks Fifth Avenue's Key To The Cure



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And I jumped out, opened her door, and told her, "We're at your house." She got so emotional; we both started crying. It was a beautiful moment.

Life in Hollywood

What's the weirdest part of your job?

It's never the acting, it's the promoting. They want you to look directly into the camera, talk about your film, and talk about yourself, and I always feel so embarrassed. It's one thing if an interviewer is sitting next to the camera and I'm talking to them, but to have a conversation with an inanimate object is so inauthentic. To look deep into the unblinking eye of the camera and talk to who? The world? It is a weird thing.

You must have a lot of weird experiences, though, right? What's the most surprising part about being an actress?

A lot of people think that as an actress you can't go anywhere, that you're always getting recognized, and that your private life is just gone. That may be true for someone like Angelina Jolie or Brad Pitt, who get harassed in public a lot.

That's what we imagine your life must be like all the time.

My everyday life is the farthest thing from that. I just live normally. You can really blend in if you want to.

HIP-HOP HISTORY

2 Read the Definitive Rap-Battle Book

→ Shea Serrano's The Rap Year Book, a history of rap told through the most important song each year since 1979, is the reading equivalent of rocking a boom box on your shoulder. And thanks to its clever art, the book is just as fun to stare at. Here, an adaptation of a chart from the '88 chapter: the number of swearwords on N.W.A's Straight Outta Compton





ATLIEN OF THE MONTH

Get Psyched for the Return of Young Thug and His Dresses

Young Thug is hip-hop's Lou Reed. Hear us out: He has real street cred (cue any one of the videos of him with firearms) and is rumored to have—in real life-plotted with someone to shoot at Lil Wavne's tour bus. But he also raps. And sings. And wears dresses. In the lead-up to the release of his debut studio album and two new mixtages. hip-hop's biggest enigma spoke to us in a New York recording studio, drenched in vellow and white diamonds. (Picture a chandelier wearing a leather jacket.) Thug is finishingschool polite. "Would anyone care for some promethazine and codeine?" he asks the

packed room.

decline.—MARK

ANTHONY GREEN

politely

GQ: Are you excited about the release of the new album and mixtapes? Young Thug: Not really.

People's biggest complaint is that you mumble. Does that ever get to you?

It don't really get to me. When it gets to me, I'll do it worse. I'll make a whole fucking mumbling album.

Why'd you decide to connect with Birdman and Cash Money Records?

Because my whole life I looked up to them. I wanted to stunt like Birdman, which I fucking am. And I wanted to be like Wayne.

Plain and simple: Did you try to have Lil Wayne killed? Fuck no.

Does it bother you that Wayne, one of your idols, clearly has a personal problem with you?

Maybe if I was a peasant it would. But of course it bothers me some, because that's what I always wanted. It was so weird: I always wanted to be in the studio with Wayne. I would tell Birdman to bring him over, but he never fucking came.

Why do you wear women's clothing?

Because women's clothes are [slimmer] than men's clothes. The jeans I got on right now, they're women's jeans. But they fit how they're supposed to fit. Like a rock star. The only thing I probably have in men's is like briefs. T-shirts. Ninety percent of my clothes are women's.

When did you start wearing predominantly women's clothing?

When I was 12 or some shit, started gambling, getting my own money. My dad wouldn't buy me tight pants. I had to get my own money to buy them.

You tote guns very openly. Are you more rock star or gangster? Ninety-nine percent of me is rock star. Of course, I'm a natural-born gangster. Who don't know that?

Are you ever worried...

That something's gonna happen to me? Of course. I'm still a human, so of course. I guess that's why I survive. I'm with anything. If you want me to be a rock star onstage, that's what I'm ready to die about. But if you got a gun in my face, I ain't gonna wimp out. I wanna die being a rock star.

What's your biggest fear? Not seeing God.

When you die? Yeah. I want to see

Yeah. I want to see Him, I really do. And I'm afraid of my mom dying. If my mom died, I wouldn't want to do nothing. I would die. Quit.

Where does she live now?

She's 51, with an enlarged heart, so at any time it could just burst or stop. But she lives somewhere in Georgia. Not a peasant can qet to her.

-FRIC SULLIVAN



4 Solve a Murder and Get Lost in the 777 N.Y.C. Blackout



WHAT NEW YORK CITY has in common with the American novel is that it is, almost by definition and for as long as anyone can remember, Not What It Used to Be. The spectacle of present-day Gotham, swimming in hedge-fund money and farm-to-table cuisine, induces regular pangs of wistful retrospect, either for a golden age of glamour or a later, grittier, meaner moment whose dangers have taken on a patina of vanished authenticity. Meanwhile, the diffident navel-gazing of so much 21st-century fiction summons forth spasms of longing for the sprawling, ambitious doorstops of yesteryear.

City on Fire, Garth Risk Hallberg's first novel, set mainly in Manhattan in the months leading up to the blackout that started on July 13, 1977, seems designed to satisfy both kinds of nostalgia. Hallberg, a 36-year-old southerner, turns his lack of firsthand knowledge into an advantage, conjuring a pulsing metropolis out of legend, lyrical prose, studious imitation, and the thrilling arrogance of imagination. A wrist-straining 944 pages long, City on Fire contains at least a dozen major characters, a score of colorful bit players, and a bouquet of typographical extras. At the center of the story is a whodunit that is also, in the best detective-novel tradition, something of a red herring. On New Year's Eve, a girl from Long Island is shot in Central Park. This crime connects downtown anarchist punks with uptown plutocrats, and disaffected suburbanites with loft-dwelling artists. As we follow the thread of the shooting backward and forward in time, we witness the courtship and dissolution of several couples and the aspirations and epiphanies of a rainbow of neurotic, cynical, idealistic, insecure strivers.

Not everything works. Evocations of 9/11 sound hollow and sententious, as they almost always do in fiction. Hallberg is better at aristocrats than anarchists, better at drugs than sex, better at free indirect style than at mimicking the distinct idioms of the American vernacular. The characters sound a lot like the narrator, and sometimes what they say is anachronistic. (It was not a thing to say "That's a thing, right?" in 1977; the word heteronormative did not enter the language until 1991.) But in the moments when Hallberg flexes his literary muscles, the effect is more charming than grating. One of the characters keeps a copy of Henry James's *Prefaces* in his desk. That counts as a tell. "Really, universally," James wrote in one of those Prefaces, "relations stop nowhere, and the exquisite problem of the artist is eternally but to draw, by a geometry of his own, the circle in which they will happily appear to do so." City on Fire, that is, should not be held to an impossible standard of comprehensiveness. Eyewitnesses and nostalgists with agendas of their own may grouse about what is missing from the geography and history of the city. But Hallberg's circle is skillfully drawn and beautifully shaded, and it includes a remarkably interesting collection of people brought together in an intricate network of coincidence.

For all the mayhem it depicts—a rape and two possible murders; arson fires, bombings, and spasms of rioting-City on Fire is a novel of connection, forgiveness, and empathy, resting on the solid bedrock of what Hallberg's anarchist punks might sneeringly call bourgeois liberal values. Or, to put it another way, what both New York and the novel were built on.—A. O. SCOTT







ACTING SCHOOL

5 Study the Faces of Fear with Taissa Farmiga

"I don't like watching scary movies," Taissa Farmiga says. She may be in the wrong business. This month the 21-year-old sister of Vera stars in the campy slasher flick The Final Girls. She was on the other side of the chain saw on American Horror Story: Coven. How does she get into character? "I'm a very jumpy person, so it's easy,' she says. We asked her to re-enact three terrified looks to prove it.—LAUREN LARSON



THE NEW DEAL

SOME MEN GET AHEAD BY PLAYING THE GAME WELL; OTHERS DO IT BY CHANGING THE GAME ALTOGETHER. THE MASTERMINDS BEHIND UP-AND-COMING MENSWEAR BRAND COMBATANT GENTLEMEN TOOK THE LATTER ROUTE. THEY CUT OUT THE MIDDLEMEN AND SEIZED THE SUPPLY CHAIN FOR THEMSELVES, MAKING OLD-WORLD CRAFTSMANSHIP ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE.

WELCOME TO THE HEIST OF THE CENTURY.

COMBATANT GENTLEMEN

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Charcoal Nailhead Suit \$200 Light Gray Twill Shirt \$30 Feeling Dotty Bow Tie \$16 Charcoal Sharkskin Suit \$220 Purple and Black Windowpane Shirt \$40 Diagonal Sky Tie \$16 COMBATANT GENTLEMEN





See Eve Hewson Go to War Over a U-2

→ Eve Hewson may have shed her gentle Irish brogue for a West Virginia twang to play a nurse on Steven Soderbergh's early-1900s period piece The Knick, but Ireland followed her to Brooklyn: She inadvertently moved across from an Irish bar. "It's the bane of my life," she says. Recently, she broke up a highly sauced bar fight by yelling Shut the fook up! from her balcony. Williamsburg hasn't softened her ability to fight Irish fire with Irish fire.

Eve's do-gooder instinct runs in the family: Her dad is Paul Hewson, known colloquially as Bono.

While most offspring of famous people wait for trust funds and easy attention, Eve's devoted herself to serious acting. She's fantastic in *The Knick*, back this month, in which she plays a ballsy nurse who's courageous enough to inject cocaine into a man's genitals. And she plays Tom Hanks's daughter in Spielberg's *Bridge of Spies*. (Which is about a pilot shot down in a U-2. Really.)

She might soon become the next über-famous Hewson. "It freaks me out. I'm going to have to start behaving in public," she says. Then again, "I think I have a 'blur face.' lassume no one will recognize or remember me." May we submit this photo as proof otherwise.

—MAGGIE LANGE

BJORN IOOSS







FALL 2015 AGJEANS.COM





GQ INSIDER SPOTLIGHT:

ANTHONY VILLEGAS

REAL-ESTATE MARKETING DIRECTOR & BLOGGER LOS ANGELES, CA

Tell us about your blog/profession. What projects are you working on?

My first blog, Of Mice & Menswear, sort of started off as a joke. My fraternity brothers were constantly asking me how to style their clothes, so I started the blog for them. At the time, I didn't really know what a blog was—but now, my life is completely different because of it. I just moved from San Francisco to L.A. for a real-estate marketing opportunity; the company initially contacted me through my blog.

How does GQ influence your style?

GQ has always influenced my style. I follow the GQ social updates, articles, trend reports, and photos to keep up with what's cool. Fashion is constantly changing, and GQ keeps me informed on what those changes are and helps me develop my own style at the same time.

FOLLOW ANTHONY: @OFMICEANDMENSWEAR / OFMICEANDMENSWEAR.COM

journalists, to studio executives, to strangers at parties-without much of a filter. So he's trying to be careful. He's 55 now, and though he's been honest, maybe to a fault, about himself, his life, and his failings ever since his second film, 2009's Precious, received six Academy Award nominations and made people curious about Lee Daniels, there are now other interested parties to consider besides himself. At the moment, as he sits at the Sunset Tower in Hollywood, miles away from his longtime New York City home, he owes Fox the first episode of the second season of his musicfamily drama, Empire. He's prepping his next film, a Richard Pryor biopic, starring Mike Epps. And next week he'll announce he's developing a show called Star, about a girl group trying to make it in Atlanta-a little TLC, a little Supremes, but set in the modern day, like Empire.

They told him to be careful, so he's trying, even though there are things he wants to say about television and Empire's overwhelming success that he knows he shouldn't. Put it this way, he says finally: For years, TV networks have underestimated the intelligence of the American public. They've underestimated Lee Daniels. Like with Precious. Or Lee Daniels' The Butler, which made \$175 million. "Everybody all my life has always said, 'Oh, no one's gonna see that movie. We're not gonna make that movie.' These studios: 'Who wants to see a movie about an obese woman?' A lot of people. We were told that The Butler was not gonna do well. We were laughed out of every studio. You know? This has changed, baby."

There are not a lot of studios laughing at Daniels now. With Empire, Daniels and his co-creator, Danny Strong, took a show about an African-American family in the music world—with the soapopera-by-way-of-Shakespeare premise of a terminally ill executive (Terrence Howard's Lucious Lyon) dodging his excon ex-wife (an on-fire Taraji P. Henson) while figuring out which of his three sons (played by Trai Byers, Jussie Smollett, and Bryshere Y. Gray) will inherit his business-and discovered a massive audience the networks didn't even know existed. Ten million people watched the premiere, back in January, a startling number that was not nearly as startling as the number of people who watched the finale: 17.6 million. The population of a small European country watching a show that, despite its avalanche of gunplay and bib-assisted blow jobs, contains more blunt, complicated reality about black life-in its earnest grappling with spirituality, homophobia, and mental illness-than practically any other show on network television this century. The kind of show where people talk without first running their thoughts through a network-executive translator-the kind of show where people say things like "Bye, Felicia!" without stopping to explain what "Bye, Felicia!" means.

"The people have been starving for this," Henson says. "Starving for this. Then it was 'Oh, it's a black thing.' Mm-mm. You can't say that anymore! People are identifying with these people, period."

Empire more or less single-handedly saved Fox, though it was conspicuously absent on the Emmy nominations lista couple for costumes, one for Henson, but otherwise shut out of the main event. Daniels went on Instagram and posted an entertaining tirade after that—"Fuck these motherfuckers!"-but he says he's not actually worrying too much about the snub. Maybe he shouldn't say this, but: "Terrence Howard calls me up after, and he goes, 'You okay?' I said, 'Dude. You're on a fucking hit show! How much money are we fucking making? How much was your fucking paycheck last week, motherfucker?"

He's been at this a long time. He started in Hollywood as a casting agent back in the '80s. He became a producer in 2001 and pretty much immediately helped Halle Berry win the first Oscar ever to go to a black actress in a leading role, for Monster's Ball. And he's done it in his own Lee Daniels-ish way. When he decided he wanted to direct, with 2006's no-budget Shadowboxer, he cast Dame Helen Mirren as an assassin, Cuba Gooding Jr. as her loyal life partner, Stephen Dorff as a randy villain, and a zebra, for reasons that no one ever acknowledges or explains.

Everything he's made—Precious, The Paperboy, The Butler, Empire-has that same strange, Technicolor glaze, that heady mix of desire and violence and sly jokes, which is to say that it's all deeply weird, like some cartoon sex dream you might not even admit to having. But in doing so, he's gradually moved from the edge of the industry all the way to the center of it. In a position of power like none he's ever had before...right?

"It's true. But here's what I feel about that. The suits just change. I don't. I'm the same dude. I'm that same cat. I'm that same cat that made the two-dollar hit Shadowboxer. I'm that same dude."

• If there's a demon Daniels hasn't exorcised yet, it's probably because he's saving it for his next script.



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You mean the suit becomes a bigger suit?

"No," Lee Daniels says, grinning. Then he does the thing they told him not to do. "They get replaced. I stay the same."

ANOTHER BIT of conversation that'll probably get Lee Daniels in trouble:

 $What \, do \, TV \, networks \, get \, wrong \, about$ the intelligence of the American public?

"I don't have an education. But I've never not listened to my voice. That voice has kept me alive. It's kept me away from bullets. It's kept me away from HIV. That I don't have it is a miracle from God. It's put me where I'm at right now, opposite you. I think it's God."

Why do you say that about HIV?

"I'll be 56 in December. When it first came out, all my friends died. Every one of them. Every boyfriend I had. Every friend I had. And I didn't know how to get it. We didn't know how you were getting it, whether you touched somebody, whether you... That I didn't get it is a miracle. It's a miracle."

What do you chalk that miracle up to?

"I have no idea. So much so that I felt. that I should have died, and I threw myself into the abyss of drugs. Like, 'Why am I here, when there are people that have better souls, that are nicer, kinder people, that are dying in my arms?"

So your reaction to surviving was to basically become...

"A drug addict. And then I got over that. I use that for my work. That's gonna get me in trouble again. I don't care." He laughs. "I don't care. Just do what you gotta do."

ONE THING YOU REALIZE really quickly about Lee Daniels is that it's all autobiography. Everything he makes is about himself. Which is funny, because his work tends to depict things that have never happened to anyone, ever. Like right now, say, we're watching the first episode of Empire's second season in an editing bay, and there is a person in a gorilla suit being lowered in a cage onto a stage at an ersatz Black Lives Matter rally, followed by a cavalcade of black celebrities—one cameo after another. It's like The Avengers for people who don't get to be in *The Avengers*. Daniels is wearing white jeans and a black Henley, and when the person in the gorilla suit removes the gorilla's head, he reaches over and grabs my shoulder. "This is how we start, honey!" he yells happily. "Yes, Gawd!"

He stands and paces around the room, working on calibrating the precise degree of provocation in the shot. He is aware that it will bother people to open the season with a caged gorilla. He's just trying to figure out *how much* it will bother people. He is accustomed to being exposed, to feeling vulnerable. The central image of Empire so far was a flashback of Lucious throwing his 5-year-old high-heel-wearing son into a trash can. This is something that actually happened to Daniels: "Just by putting myself out there on a limbthat is what's healing to me."

He's been doing this since the beginning. Shadowboxer, despite the zebra, is a sad and longing movie about revenge and surrogate families, two things Daniels knows something about: His father, a Philadelphia police officer, was killed when Daniels was a teenager; much later, Daniels adopted his imprisoned brother's twins, whom he has since raised as his own. Precious is basically one long statement about a deeply traumatized child finding love and self-acceptance outside her home. Even The Butler, which was based on another man's story, is also about fathers and sons and the stubbornly unrecognized value of black life.

"Me, I'm messy, I'm messy, messy, messy," Daniels says. That quality is

embedded in his work; often it has seemed like its signature quality-messy, messy, messy. The New York Times, reviewing Shadowboxer, wrote that the film "leaves you with your mouth hanging open-partly in admiration of its audacity and partly in disbelief at its preposterousness." Six years

later, the same paper called The Paperboy, not entirely disapprovingly, "a hot mess."

I'm reading these back to Daniels when he cuts me off.

"I don't want to read that. No, please don't. I don't want to do that."

The last review he says he deliberately read, back in 2005, called him a hack, and to this day, "I use that line. I call myself a hack whenever I get angry at myself."

Do you recognize the quality in your work that reviewer was trying to put a finger on?

"I think that whoever that guy is, I would imagine he's probably a white man. He hasn't walked in my shoes. So he doesn't know, or he hasn't smelled the inside of a trash can. So his perspective on life is a completely different perspective. And I respect that he don't respect it. Check. Next! Don't tell me that again. I hate that, I hate that,"

That I read it, or that he said it? "That he said it. And both."

He turns his attention back to the edit. "Fuck me. Why is she-" Daniels says to his editor. On the screen, we gaze at one of the show's couples, engaged in some improbable physical contact. "Would she be rubbing sweat on his chest?"

The question seems rhetorical and the editor treats it as such.

"I'm not going to worry about it-it's TV," Daniels says finally. "Fuck it! Keep it moving, baby! Lee Daniels, you're a hack!"

ONE SIDE EFFECT of Empire's success is that Daniels is often called upon to speak on behalf of African-Americans in his industry—a responsibility he says he relishes. But it can lead to some discordant moments. Earlier this year, The Hollywood Reporter held a roundtable discussion with several writer-producers, including Daniels, House of Cards' Beau Willimon, Damon Lindelof, and others; the subject of writers'-room diversity came up, and Daniels found himself polling his fellow creators on how many African-American writers they had on their shows. Things got tense; Willimon told Daniels it was a 'weird question."

When I bring this episode up with Daniels, he says diplomatically about Willimon: "He had his right to argue

When the person in the gorilla suit at the Black Lives Matter rally removes the gorilla's head, Daniels reaches over and grabs my shoulder. "This is how we start, honey!"

> that." But then he continues: "My experience watching TV since I was a childthat I'm watching white people write the black experience—is offensive to me. And I'm sorry that you're offended that I'm offended!"

People seemed mad at you for asking.

"What does that say to you? I can't even talk about it again, because then I'll get upset again. I just don't-I'm trying to understand what that means."

I think it means that people feel like they're being accused of something they don't want to be accused of.

"But are they guilty of it?"

DANIELS'S HONESTY is so seemingly total and endearing that it can take a while to realize that he's not in fact telling you everything. There is a reason that Daniels holds back parts of his life, and the reason-beyond the obvious human impulse toward self-protection-tends to be that he has yet to mine those parts for a movie or a TV show. For instance: In the Lee Daniels legend, he came to Hollywood with a couple of dollars in his pocket, started a nursing agency that made him a very wealthy man, then sold it and joined the industry with a couple-million-dollar head start.

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Lee Daniels's Life Is an Open Book/Melodrama

If you've seen his work, you've seen his story—whether you knew it or not.—LU FONG

PRECIOUS THE PAPERBOY THE BUTLER **EMPIRE**

-SCREEN

REAL LIFE

The title character of Precious, played by Gabourey Sidibe, is an obese, abused teen who copes by escaping into a fantasy life of red-carpet events and gorgeous boyfriends.

"My sister." Daniels once said. "had a chicken wing in one hand and a crack pipe in the other, and yet she had a line of white men waiting for her. Like my sister, Gabby is comfortable in her body.



While promoting this lurid potboiler, Daniels took some heat for a joke he made about shooting Zac Efron in his tighty-whities: "I'm gay," he told Interview, "so why not?"

"I ran around naked all the time growing up," he added. "My mom would say, 'Put some fucking clothes on! What's wrong with you? Subconsciously, it was about my personal experience.'



In this biopic based on a real-life White House butler to several presidents, his activist son gets tossed from a family dinner after he takes a dig at his father for serving white people.

"From the beginning of our existence here, as African-Americans, we were help, he told Filmmaker Magazine. "There were several moments where I was embarrassed that my mother had to do this.'



In a flashback during the Empire pilot, Lucious throws his 5-year-old son, Jamal, into a trash can after seeing him strut around in red high heels and a head wrap.

"Mv earliest memory was walking down the stairs in my mother's heels. My dad—he was a cop—put me in a trash can. He said, 'You already have it bad, cuz you're blacknow you're a faggot, too.'

This is true. He'd been working as a receptionist at an agency, thought he could do better, and did-by his mid-twenties, he had hundreds of people working for him. But it's also true that his success in Los Angeles was not nearly as immediate as he has sometimes suggested. He tells me, begrudgingly, that he was homeless. He says he was directing theater at a church. And then he stops himself. "I ain't gonna talk about it with you, but I did what I had to do. It was a rough time." Daniels pauses. He describes Star, the girlgroup show he's making: "The lead girl is white, hot, she looks like Anna Nicole Smith but she sings like Amy Winehouse. She's a little trashy, and she will do anything it takes to get to the top." The show, he says, is about "what you will do to get to what it is that you got to get to. I've never talked about it. But I'm gonna explore it with Star."

Daniels says that one reason he was drawn to making a film about Richard Pryor-which he's shooting in 2016 with Epps, Oprah Winfrey, and Kate Hudson-is because he and Pryor have so much in common: "the concept of being true to your art, and also the whole concept of the freebase, the crack pipe-my addiction to cocaine and crack during that time, and understanding him on a very primal level, and understanding why he did it."

So, Daniels says, "I gotta do Richard Pryor to get that hump off my back, man. It's the one last thing that I just gotta get out there and shake it, shake the soul. It's like shaking your underwear out. It's taking a bath and just like scrubbing your skin from the memory."

DANIELS SAYS he heals himself through the work. Family and friends, though, are more complicated for him-conversations he can have in front of millions are often conversations he's unable to have at home. even with his own adopted children. "My son is 19 years old, and he's just finding out that he's black. He's struggling right now. I did everything I could to my kids to put them on the Upper West Side, in fancy-ass schools. Because I want them to have what I didn't have. Now he's thrown into the abyss, as a black man, and he knows now, and he's got a chip on his shoulder with me." Why?

"Because I wasn't honest with him when we were on 74th and Amsterdam as taxis were driving by and not picking us up, and water splashing on us as they go down and pick up the white family. He couldn't understand why. I didn't want to have that conversation. It was too fucking ugly."

Daniels is aware of the irony. "Dude, as honest as I try to be, I couldn't be that honest with my kids."

Or he could be, but only through the medium of a TV show. Hakeem, Empire's spoiled princeling, being forced to grow up-that's how Lee Daniels is able to be honest. "Everything that's up there is my relationship with my kid," Daniels says. The show is how he talks to the people he loves.

And lately, Daniels says, they've begun to talk back. He recently got a letter from his brother. The same brother who in 1996, according to Daniels, left two kids on their mother's doorstep, unable to raise them because he was in a prison cell-kids that

Daniels would come to love and raise as his own. The same brother, says Daniels, who declined to speak to him for much of his life, on account of his sexual orientation.

But "he sent me a letter from prison recently," Daniels says. In it, "he says: 'I'm sorry for hating you just because.' All these years. He's been in jail, in and out of jail since he's been twentyish. 'I'm sorry for hating you just because.' Because I was gay."

What do you think prompted that letter? "He's probably the king over there, in the prison that he's at. He said they all shut down when Empire comes on. Like, that shit gets silent! You know, don't come near the TV. They have to hear it, because there's no rewind. I mean: That was more important to me than getting a nomination for an Academy Award. For him to tell me that...'I'm sorry for hating you all these years just because.' For him to understand that through the work-because of the work!"

The first season's finale, when Terrence Howard's character embraces his son...

"Dream." Then he sings: "Dream on!" Is that something you had hoped for?

"I think my dad would be blown away by the success of it all. And that demands respect." Daniels pauses, then tells a story about his father-the elder Daniels was driving once, in West Philadelphia, when...

Actually, Daniels decides, he's saving that one, too. "I'm gonna put that in, I think. In a flashback. I don't know whether this season or next season."

He smiles. "Maybe this season."

ZACH BARON is GQ's staff writer.

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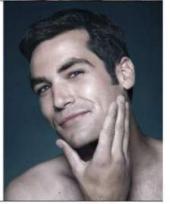
Dip a clean, sharp blade in hot water. Using gentle pressure, shave with the grain of your beard. You'll notice that the hair may grow in different directions, so for a closer shave, re-lather and shave again gently against the grain.

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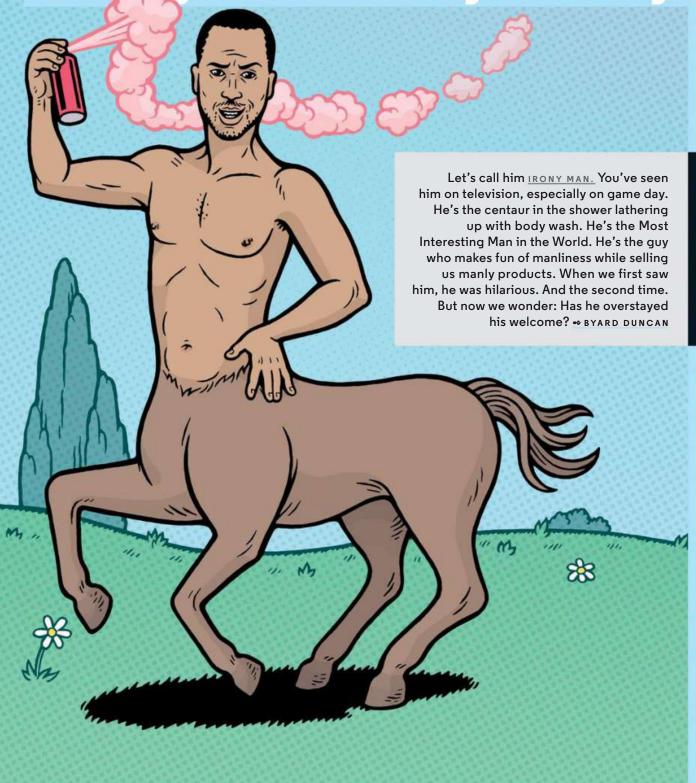
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THE WAIT IS OVER! THE NFL SEASON IS HERE, AND AS YOUR FAVORITE TEAM MAKES ITS PUSH TOWARD SUPER BOWL 50. THE NFL IS CELEBRATING SUPER BOWL ON THE FIFTY WITH A LOOK BACK ON THE GAME'S GREAT HISTORY AND A CHARGE FORWARD TO AN EVEN BRIGHTER FUTURE. HERE WE UPDATE THE STYLE OF FORMER SUPER BOWL MVP'S, TERRELL DAVIS AND DEION BRANCH WITH MODERN LOOKS FEATURING ON THE FIFTY T-SHIRTS, TO HELP YOU LOOK SHARP EVERY DAY—NOT JUST ON GAME DAY.





TERRELL DAVIS

Denver Broncos: S.B. XXXII MVP

During Super Bowl XXXII, my style off the field was very big, very loose, very colorful suits. I really expressed my style on the field with my custommade cleats and fingerless gloves."

We're bringing Terrell's baggy suit up-to-date by matching his favorite classic Super Bowl T-shirt with a perfectly tailored two-button navy suit. Key details-narrow peak lapels, a pocket square, flat-front trousersmake this look post-game pressconference ready. Finish it off with classic sneakers, a pom-pom hat, and headphones for an MVP look that is a little more casual.

On the Fifty Scrum T-Shirt; '47 Cuff Beanie with Pom





On the Fifty

DEION BRANCH

New England Patriots: S.B. XXXIX MVP

"I had more of a freestyle approach to fashion during Super Bowl XXXIX. Regardless if it was wearing jeans or a suit, my style was more relaxed than what the guys are wearing now."

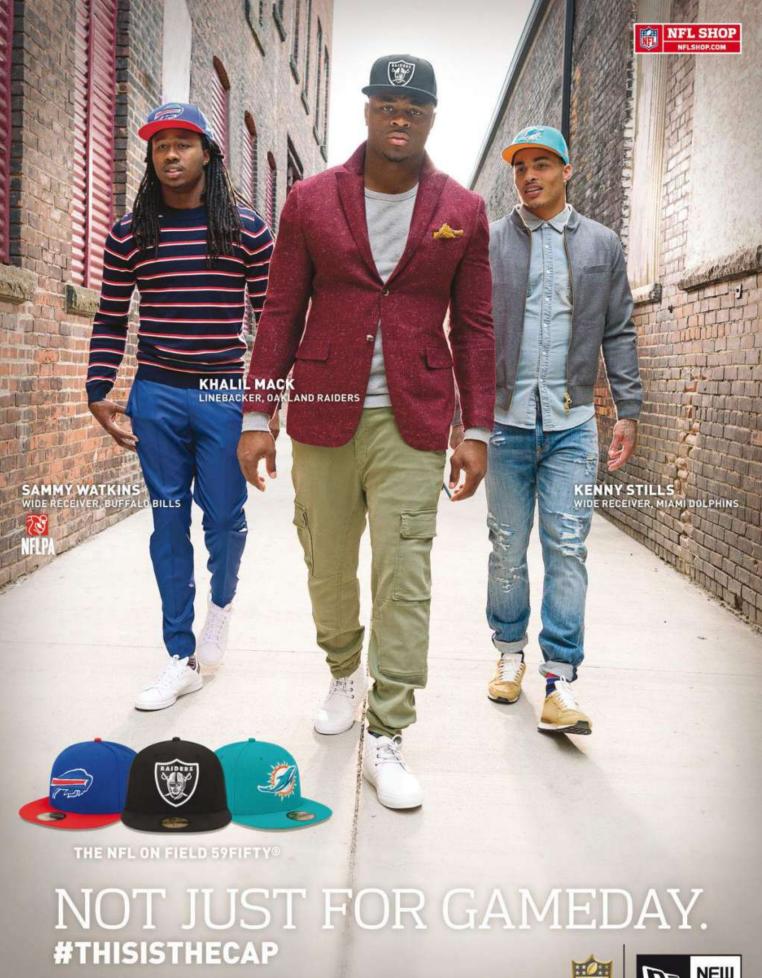
These days, a guy can be relaxed and still look sharp. Today's tailored sweats are more fitted, less baggy, and sport style elements like contrast drawstrings. They go anywhere jeans go, but with extra comfort. A mediumweight ribbed jacket over your favorite team colors adds sporty sophistication, while high-tops and a bold scarf show your style game is all pro.

On the Fifty Long-Sleeve T-Shirt; '47 Franchise Cap



NORDSTROM













First appeared: In 2010 as former football player Isaiah Mustafa, barely clothed in a bathroom, holding Old Spice body wash.

Persona: Zoolander meets Magnum, P.I., meets taking a shower.

Subliminal
message: Man
up, lady men!
Other notable

appearances: The Brut ad in which a Normal Joe slaps on the cologne and—voilà!his girlfriend, dachshund, and goldfish are all plump with child; Old Spice's followup with a topless Terry Crews, looking veinier than a ripe blue cheese and glossier than a basted turkey haunch.

Greatest feats:
Riding a motorcycle
with a hot-tub
sidecar; making
abstract concepts
like "sunset over
Mount Everest"
and "the nation
of Fiji" into smells
people want
to buy; breathing
life into Terry
Crews's career.

How it's supposed to make you feel: Simultaneously too skinny and too fat.



IRONY MAN ROSE TO PROMINENCE in February 2010 during an Old Spice ad just before Super Bowl XLIV. You may remember it: this witty Adonis, fresh out of the shower, body wash in hand, towel draped around a laser-etched midsection. With pecs like horseshoe crabs and a baritone smooth as butter, he issued a cascade of promises to our girlfriends—a better-smelling man, two tickets to that thing she loves, a fistful of diamonds. He strutted from the bathroom to a boat to the back of a white horse. Then, like an aerosol spritz, he was gone.

Here was our new male avatar! His pitch: Rather than pressuring us to be macho, or mocking us for not being macho enough, Irony Man was poking fun at the very concept of manliness itself. Deep down, we'd always known that a hygiene product couldn't make us stronger, smarter, or sexier. We'd always known cigarettes don't actually make us Marlboro Men. But here was a new cultural figure rewarding us for that knowledge. Aren't ads dumb?! I'm right there with you, big guy.

It seemed like an infallible tactic. When an idea comes pre-assembled with a disarming joke about its own irrelevance, what can you say back? For the past five years, Irony Man has dominated. He's appeared in different forms-an absurdist cosmopolitan for Dos Equis, a grizzled mountain man for Dr Pepper. You can even argue that Ron Swanson on Parks and Rec is a version of Irony Man. He's specialized in a new kind of over-the-top spectacle-beguiling anti-ads that made us feel like we'd been pantsed and handed a lollipop in quick succession. He wasn't issuing rules about being a man; he was mocking the idea that we all had to be strong, un-sissified ids-with-a-pulse. This has been his golden era.

But somewhere between a sardonic plug for Lime-A-Ritas and the thirtieth time a baby-oiled centaur seduced us from his shower, something fizzled. Irony Man stopped being a cunning response to the archetypical pressures to be manly. He morphed from a subversion of the norm to the norm itself—at some point making fun of something becomes awfully similar to not making fun of it. And now just seeing his face poses a troubling question: Is it really possible to sell us the idea that selling is stupid?

Football season is upon us, which means we'll be seeing a lot of him soon—probably swinging from a vine with a crossbow in his teeth before sticking the landing on the back of a cheetah and then endorsing a well-known brand of wart cream. But it won't matter, because it's over.

And in lieu of an obituary, we humbly offer this guide to his many appearances and forms. Irony Man is dead; let us celebrate his reign.

BYARD DUNCAN is a writer living in Oakland, California.

First appeared: In 2010 as a retro

mountain man for Dr Pepper Ten with a beard the size of a beehive.

Actual ironic tagline: "The manliest low-calorie soda in the history of mankind."

Another actual tagline: "Not for women."

Alternate tagline:

"The only thing less manly than a ten-calorie soda is giving a fuck about calories in the first place."

Greatest feat:

Creating the world's first sexist soda; blatant overcompensation.

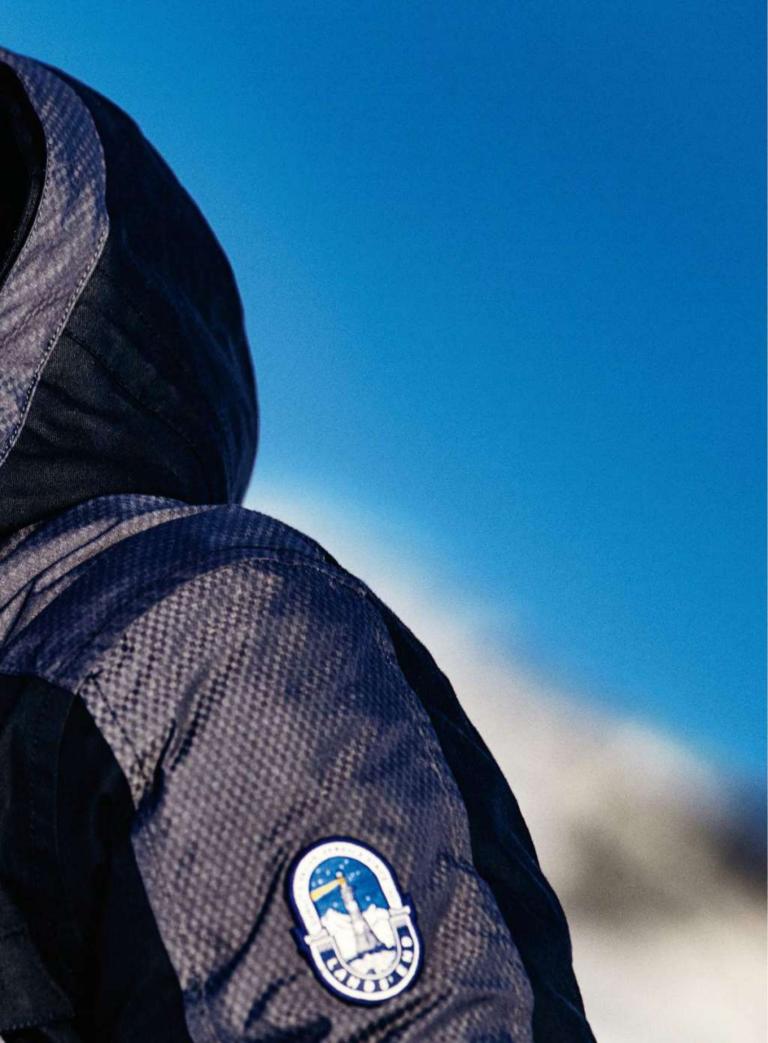
Other notable appearances:

A guy who headbutts a tree for Smith & Forge Hard Cider; Duluth Trading Company's flying-log-chopping, moose-tonguesnapping "limberjack."

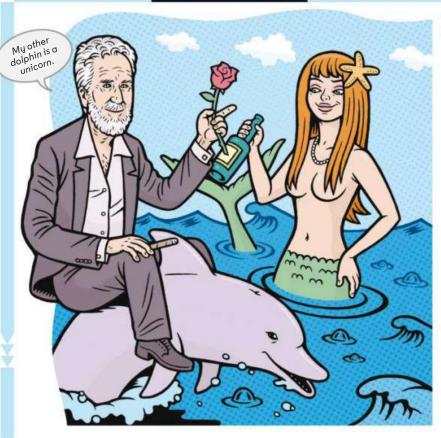
How it's supposed to make you feel: A little too metrosexual.













First appeared: In 2006 as Dos Equis's Most Interesting Man in the World.

Persona: If James **Bond and Ernest** Hemingway had a macho Spanish baby.

Greatest feats:

Everything. "He is the only man to ever ace a Rorschach test.... Alien abductors have asked him to probe them."

Unrevealed accomplishments: This man has taken down at least three

terrorist cells. Notable appearances: Every ad that aired during Mad Men breaks.

Ironic tagline:

"I don't always drink beer, but when I do, I prefer Dos Equis." What the tagline should be: "I am 77 years old, and when I drink beer I tend to rise to urinate four to six times a night." Un-ironic truth: The guy who played

the Most Interesting Man, Jonathan Goldsmith, acted in episodes of Knight Rider, MacGyver, and Dallas; is probably pretty interesting.

How it's supposed to make you feel: Unaccomplished and thirsty.

> My nipples are considered an alternative



First appeared: In 2013 as the guy playing the tuba in that Just for Men ad.

Best appearance:

Jean-Claude Van Damme executes a ball-busting split between two reversing Volvo trucks to the dulcet tones of Enya. Also known as: The Do Not Try This at Home (or Anywhere Else). Greatest feat: DOING

THE SPLIT BETWEEN You should see TWO TRUCKS. me between two helicopters.

How it's supposed to make you feel: "I want to do that."

How else it should make you feel: "I can't do that." Hard truth: Getting rid of your gray won't actually enable you to blast tuba while rock climbing.

Not-as-hard truth:

Jean-Claude Van Damme is aging really well.

The ultimate irony: The stuntin' is so cool it blows a hole through any irony.





First appeared:

In 2013 as Seth Rogen and Paul Rudd playing themselves at a tryout for a Samsung, commercial, only to be upstaged by LeBron James.

General vibe:

We're not like other celebrities reduced to commercials, 'cause we're making fun of celebrity commercials!

sell anything; see



page 222) chooses DirecTV while "Super-Creepy Rob Lowe" chooses cable; Jeff Goldblum for GE lightbulbs. Ironic forebears:

Mike Myers and Dana Carvey hawking Pepsi and Doritos mid-scene in Wayne's World. Greatest feats: Inspiring moms all over to like "that Seth Rogaine and Paul Rudds" even more. Celebrity who

probably can't pull

this off: Sean Penn.





Sneaker Wars

EVERYBODY wants the Yeezys. It's a frigid February night during New York Fashion Week, and Kanye West has just spent the afternoon at a runway event in SoHo unveiling his first fashion collection for Adidasa collection anchored by the futuristic Yeezy Boost 750s, a.k.a. the Yeezys, a.k.a. suede hightop sneakers that look straight out of the Star Wars props department, complete with side zips and patented springy soles made from spaceship-grade foam. And now here comes Kanye, clambering





onto a purpose-built stage at the intersection of Broadway and Fifth Avenue, in the shadow of the Flatiron Building, at an event that's been billed as a concert but feels closer to a product launch. Ten thousand people have shown up tonight, many claiming their tickets with an Adidas app and the rest waiting untold hours in temperatures that barely top 15 degrees, the cold compounded by gut-punches of snowy wind barreling off the East River.

"We ain't even gonna mention that other company no more, right?" Kanye asks the crowd. "We ain't wearing that other company no more, right?"

That other company, of course, is Nikenot only the most popular sneaker manufacturer but the single most valuable apparel brand in the world. Nike has 57,000 employees and a market cap north of \$86 billion. And in these halcyon days of sneaker culture-the once humble sneaker having become the focal point of personal style— Nike has a heritage that consumers respect and that its competitors can't buy.

In fact, until relatively recently, if you happened to be a big-name rapper or marquee athlete, you didn't really think twice about signing with Nike. Where else would you go? Kanye himself parked his Air Yeezy line at Nike for four years.

Then, in 2013, in a deal worth a reported \$10 million, Kanye abruptly announced he was leaving Nike and going to Adidas, the German rival that keeps its North American headquarters in Portland, Oregon, just up the road from Nike HQ in suburban Beaverton. Nike was shackling his creative freedom, he said. Not paying him enough. Not respecting him as a designer. "They weren't giving me the opportunity to grow," he alleged. "They were working off an old business model."

He wasn't alone in his disenchantment. Professional shoe designers-the kind who do it full-time and don't have side gigs as platinum recording artists-were saying similar things about Nike. "Stifling," they called it. One former designer described a paranoid corporate culture of profound "distrust and intimidation."

Kanye spent the next year and a half developing the Yeezy Boosts with designers at Adidas.

"Sing it loud for Adidas for supporting me," he tells the New York crowd, his silhouette magnified on the screen behind him. "[They] let me get my dreams out, let me make shit for y'all when everybody was suffocating me."

Within minutes of their release, the initial 9,000-pair run of \$350 Yeezys has vanished from stores around the country, and the average price on resale sites is \$1,500, with some profiteers asking as much as five grand. It feels like the first time in years

The Endorsement Battle, Part 1

Nike's endorsement strategy seems to be: Crush your opponent. Because, with a budget that's reportedly allowed them to spend \$8 billion on endorsements since 2002, they can. Behold a tiny fraction of the company's endless all-star roster.

EAM NIKE



(maybe even since the original Reebok Pumps in 1989) that any sneaker company has drawn blood against Nike.

And it's enough to make you ask yourself, if you happen to be the kind of person who cares deeply about sneakers, as more and more of us do, whether the tide in this lopsided fight might finally be turning.

THE EXPERTS WHO estimate the size of the global sneaker business put the number around \$55 billion, greater than the entire GDP of Ethiopia. No one buys more sneakers than Americans, and we're buying more than ever. According to the premier analytics firm NPD Group, American consumers spent \$28 billion on sneakers last year alone, an almost 50 percent bump from just five years previous. Matt Powell, a self-described "sneakerologist" with NPD, believes the growth will continue for the foreseeable future. We are entering, he says, a "permanent state of sneaker-ness."

Subscribers to this magazine (or anyone who spends any reasonable time out of doors) will understand how Powell can be so confident. A decade back, sneakers were, for the majority of adults, casual footwear, designated for specific occasions: the gym, an athletic event, mowing the lawn. Today we wear sneakers everywhere-to work, to dinner, to church, to weddings-and spend as much on them as we do on dress shoes.

Controlling 62 percent of the market (compared with Adidas's 5 percent), Nike is the primary beneficiary of our addiction, and the reasons for its supremacy are

myriad. It is big. It is smart. Its endorsement roster is a portfolio of human blue-chip stocks. It caters to traditionalists with oldschool Blazers, Jordans, and Dunks-some of the coolest and most coveted sneakers ever made-while testing the bounds of how futuristic a shoe can look and feel. (See, most recently, the Flyknit.) It employs more designers than any other shoe manufacturer (650 compared with Adidas's 200) and gives them unparalleled resources. Nike will take expensive risks, and when it whiffs, as it recently did with an ill-fated and quickly canceled snowboarding line, it acknowledges the error and moves on.

For years, Adidas appeared destined to fall further behind Nike in the States. Yes, Adidas had its deep roots in soccer culture (it still outfits clubs including Manchester United, A.C. Milan, and Real Madrid), and yes, it remained a top sneaker retailer in Western Europe. But although it kept offices in Portland, most of its design staff and senior brass were stuck in Adidas's global headquarters, in the German factory town of Herzogenaurach. Unsurprisingly, Adidas products often appeared out of touch with the average U.S. customer and tone-deaf about the American holy trinity of football, baseball, and basketball.

That began to change last year, with the installation of a new Adidas Group North America president, Mark King, who has mounted an unprecedented challenge to Nike—of which the Kanye shoe is only a small part. Under King, Adidas has poured money into advertising and gobbled up



new endorsees. His biggest coup came this summer, when he outbid Nike to snatch away the NBA's bearded wonder, James Harden, in a deal reportedly worth \$200 million over 13 years. In fact, Adidas is in the midst of the most aggressive marketing campaign in company history, showcasing music-industry talent like Pharrell, who has designed his own polkadot Adidas sneakers and lime green track jackets. Last year, Adidas also sold out of its \$800-a-pair sneaker collaboration with goth designer Rick Owens, the dark lord of haute menswear, who stitched his freaky sneaks with goat leather. The low-top Yeezy Boost 350, with a Primeknit mesh upper and rope laces, dropped in June, selling out within an hour.

Adidas has unveiled a key innovation in its Boost line, which utilizes that springy, patented foam in the sole. It has also positioned classic Adidas Originals sneakers like the Stan Smith and the Superstar-recently relaunched for its 45th anniversary-less as athletic footwear and more as straight fashion. And it has moved Adidas creative director Paul Gaudio from Herzogenaurach to Portland, along with a small army of top designers who have been tasked with ripping the American market away from Nike.

Young tastemakers are taking note. In August, Adidas announced the signing of the dapper, baby-Afro-wearing NBA rookie Justise Winslow, a national champion this year with Duke, whose statement about Adidas after signing was telling: "What they've been doing with Kanye and Originals is changing the game."

Adidas may never be able to approach the reported \$3 billion Nike spends every year on marketing, but it's trying everything it can to out-cool Nike-to win the battle of taste first, ultimately building enough street cred to win the long-term financial contest.

A buyer for one of the most beloved streetwear stores in the country, who asked to remain anonymous because he works closely with both Adidas and Nike, told me that the Yeezy launch was "insane-you just shut off your fucking phone, because all these people are calling you, begging you for a pair. So look, is Nike catchable in the short term? Probably not. But if you're able to create this kind of hype that the Yeezy did, and to sustain it, then you're getting somewhere. Then you're looking at a real war."

THIS SUMMER, 77-year-old Nike chairman Phil Knight, the Steve Jobs of the swoosh, announced a succession plan that would eventually pass control of the company to chief executive Mark Parker. But Knight isn't going anywhere yet: When I visit Beaverton on a rare sunny Pacific Northwest day, my tour guide makes sure to

The Endorsement Battle, Part 2

Because Adidas can't afford to compete monetarily with Nike, it differentiates itself with attitude. Adidas endorsements go to edgier, younger athletes and celebrities who cross over into the world of fashion. (Or who can at least beat Federer at Wimbledon.)

EAM ADIDAS



point out the glass-walled office where the company co-founder meets with athletes and reviews new products.

Nike calls its headquarters a "campus," and the place—with its man-made lake and undulating running trail and blossoming cherry trees-is undeniably beautiful, in a sleekly corporate way. Still, it's hard to shake the Area 51 vibe: Tight-lipped guards in trim red Nike shirts and sleek black Nike caps roam the grounds in pairs. And you can't wait anywhere without encountering the tarantula eye of a camera (or eight) staring back at you.

The company has good reason to be paranoid. Last July, a grand jury in Portland indicted former Nike promotions manager Tung Wing Ho and two other men for conspiracy to transport, receive, and sell at least \$679,000 worth of stolen goods: Surveillance footage had captured Ho leaving work with an overloaded duffel bag. After obtaining a search warrant for his home, the FBI and local sheriff's department found 1,941 pairs of rare Nike sneakers stacked to the ceiling. Ho pleaded guilty in late April; he will be sentenced later this year.

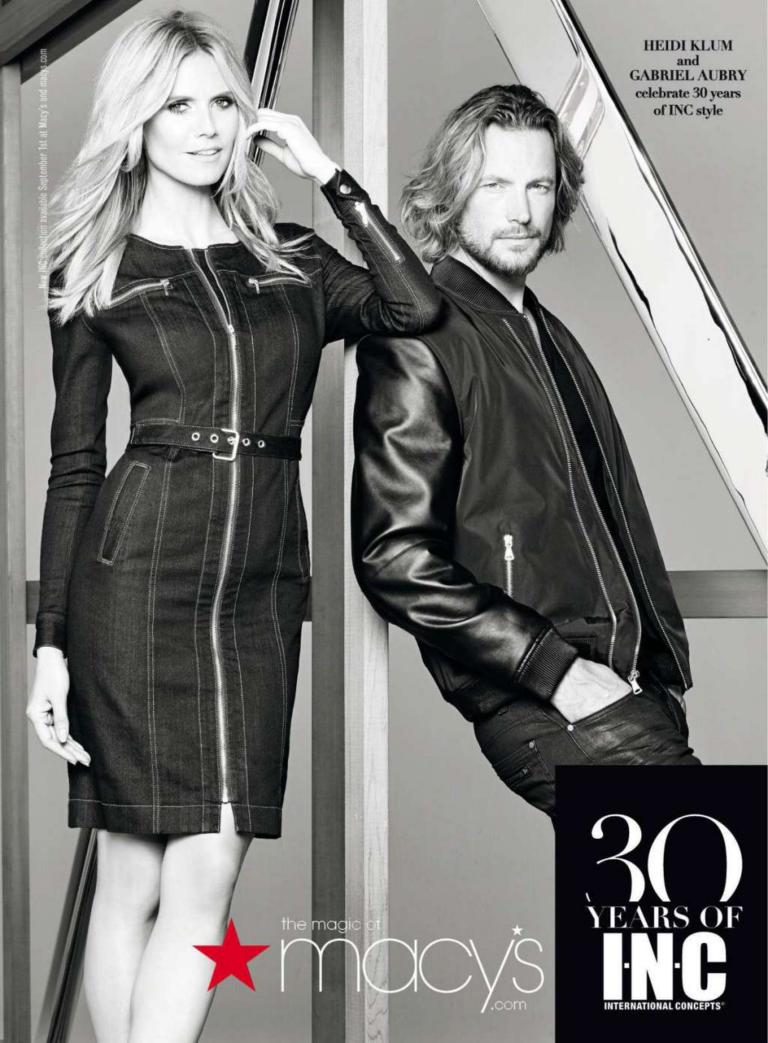
If Ho had been able to cart so many actual sneakers out of HQ, what was to stop competitors from getting their hands on designs for upcoming shoes? Nike couldn't risk the leak turning into a flood. It erected tall gates around the edge of the property, created military-style checkpoints, and installed a range of new cameras with a state-of-the-art surveillance suite to control all the feeds.

"We've had to move some teams around, and we've added a lot more security to the entrances of the buildings," my tour guide explains. "They used to be very open, with very big display cases on the athletes, but with more money and more people poking around..." He shrugs. "Bad things have happened."

We pass the Innovation Kitchen, the nerve center of Nike's design operations. With its blueprints and prototypes and carefully cataloged "library" of every shoe Nike has every produced, the Kitchen, which is off-limits to all but a small cadre of designers and researchers, has taken on mythic stature in the minds of sneakerheads; it is the fount, the wellspring, the womb from which the best sneakers in the world have burst.

Which is why Nike threw such a fit and unleashed such a legal furor over the recent defection-to Adidas, no less-of three Kitchen superstars, designers Denis Dekovic, Mark Miner, and Marc Dolce. The Croatian-born Dekovic had joined Nike in 2005 and climbed the ladder until he was the senior design director for soccer shoes. Miner, the youngest of the group, heavily tattooed and perpetually dressed in a black V-neck T-shirt, had come to Nike from Michael Kors in 2007 and specialized in running shoes. Dolce helped develop some of Nike's most coveted products, including the Air Force 1, a pillar of hip-hop culture that is meant to be kept spotless white.

In 2014—discouraged at what they would later describe as a repressive atmosphere



The Endorsement Battle, Part 3: The Shoes

No one's gonna buy a sneaker just because some celebrity tells him to. The shoe itself has to be awesome. Here, some of the most attention-getting sneakers of the past 30 years, as rendered in watercolor by Brooklyn artist Ken Solomon, who's in the process of painting a series featuring dozens and dozens more.



Adidas Yeezy Boost 350

After spurning Nike for Adidas, Kanye West dropped back-to-back sellout smashes with his high-top 750 model and this low-top.



Nike Air Zoom Generation (LeBron I)

Adidas tried to court a teenage LeBron by outfitting his high school team. King James signed with Nike anyway. Here, his first shoe.



Nike Air Jordan I

Going into endorsement negotiations, "I was pro Adidas," Michael Jordan once said. But Nike offered him creative input on his shoe's design. You know the rest.



Adidas Stan Smith by Pharrell

Smith began endorsing the consummate tennis shoe in '71. Today's hipsters wear the all-white version with suits; Pharrell's polka-dot remix feels more like Pop Art.



Nike KD8

Kevin Durant's signature shoes are a lot like his game—they put up eye-popping numbers. The line's 2014 sales total was a cool \$195 million.

in the Kitchen-Dekovic, Miner, and Dolce began discussing the creation of their own design studio. Adidas duly extended the trio an offer, which they accepted: Leave Beaverton. Open that studio under the Adidas banner in Brooklyn. Become the anti-Nike: small and nimble, freethinking and anti-bureaucratic, empowered to channel ideas straight from the streets and into production.

Nike retaliated by filing a \$10 million lawsuit alleging breach of contract, along with a host of other charges, including civil conspiracy. Central to the complaint was the contention that the three designers were providing Adidas with trade secrets. Nike alleged that Dekovic had copied the contents of his corporate laptop before departing and sent himself a file of confidential design documents.

"After examining 27 electronic devices and after the designers produced over 69,113 pages of information in discovery, Nike still has no evidence of any actionable misappropriation of trade secrets," an attorney for the designers wrote in a motion in April. Two months later, Nike and the designers agreed to settle the suit for undisclosed terms.

Adidas put the three designers on the payroll shortly thereafter, setting them up smack in the middle of the world's preeminent streetwear scene.

IF BEAVERTON IS BIG and glistening and heavily fortified, Adidas's U.S. headquarters a few miles downriver in Portland proper, in a much smaller steel-and-glass cluster near an old shipping yard, feel downright homey. The only security is a tired woman with gray hair, who encourages me to write my name in Sharpie on a white sticker.

Paul Gaudio, Adidas's global design director, works out of an office on the east side of the building. A veteran Adidas manhe has spent 20 years at the company, with only a brief interlude at Norton Motorcycles-Gaudio has tight-cropped silver hair and hooded slate-blue eyes. The day we meet, he is wearing a black T-shirt, straight-leg jeans, and a pair of battered leather boots. His wife's initials are tattooed across his knuckles.

On the table before us is a pair of Yeezy 750s. The shoe, he suggests, with its \$350 price tag and limited-edition cache, isn't so different in function from, say, an \$845K

Porsche 918 Spyder—an all-but-unobtainable product that lifts the profile of the brand as a whole. "There's a halo that comes off it," he tells me, picking up one of the shoes, "and you hope it casts light on everything else you do. It's a statement piece, right? You pull some of what's so interesting about it into the broader offerings."

Behind him is an array of shoe sketches that I promise Adidas I will under no circumstances disclose, but suffice it to say that many of them are beautiful and strange, like talons, or the type of sharpened spaceship that might come shricking out the ass of a Death Star. The sketches, cooked up by a crew of young designers, typify the provocative work Gaudio wants to see come out of the Brooklyn satellite office. "We can reward young talents by letting them rotate through locations like that," he says.

Gaudio estimates at least a couple of dozen employees will work in the Brooklyn space, which he says will have its own socialmedia center and consumer researchers. The leash will be intentionally long, he adds, the creatives encouraged to play with concepts that might've never been entertained under the old Adidas-or at Nike.



The executive who allegedly helped persuade Nike's troika to flee for Adidas is Brian Foresta, the vice president of design for basketball, a sport where Adidas has an especially steep uphill climb. Foresta (who also used to work for Nike) is 41 but could pass for two decades younger: He wears his dark hair lacquered straight across his head and his beard long but trimmed. His office is a carpeted and densely curated lair. like a room-sized mood board. There are pictures of A\$AP Rocky and Biggie Smalls, swatches and splashes of color pinned to tackboards, a luxurious white couch with a plush rainbow-colored Adidas pillow.

"When brands take big swings, it's like a sugar rush-it's a spike, and then it kind of tails off," Foresta tells me. "I've seen us do that in the past, and that's not what we want to do." Instead, he says, he's determined to double down on projects like the Crazylight Boost-a sneaker line debuted at All-Star Weekend by Timberwolves small forward Andrew Wiggins, the 20-year-old NBA Rookie of the Year-and continue to invest heavily in up-and-coming talent.

"I have all the respect in the world for a competitor like Nike," Foresta says, "but they don't intimidate us in any manner, because they're heavy, they're big, they're oversaturated in the market, and I think people are looking for a change."

OF COURSE, TO NIKE, "oversaturation" is another word for domination. Adidas may have momentum. It may have an underdog's spunk. But Nike has won the sneaker wars so decisively for so long that it could coast for years on just its heritage models. The Jordan brand alone has more than 20 times Adidas's share of the American basketball-shoe market.

During my Beaverton visit, I attend an event to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Nike's seminal Air Max shoe, known for its ultra-cushy heel. Twenty-odd journalists are invited, including a guy from GQ Korea, a loud but amiable Brit, one Brazilian, and a pair of Japanese women who have brought along their own translator. We enjoy a three-course meal overlooking the lake and witness presentations on the history and cultural relevance of the Air Max, and then the iconic Nike designer Tinker Hatfield emerges and there is a moment described in the official schedule in language that may or may not be Standard American English as "Tinker comes to the big punctuation and moves to unveil the Zero," the Zero being the new Air Max Zero, a shoe that, in the personal opinion of this correspondent, actually looks less than earth-shattering and maybe a little K-Swiss-ish.

After the ceremony concludes, I am given eight minutes to speak one-on-one with Hatfield, and by "one-on-one" I mean it's

just the two of us plus at least five extremely attentive PR people-Hatfield almost never gives interviews, and when he does, they are tightly scripted affairs. Hatfield examines my shoes and looks as if he's just smelled roadkill. I am not wearing Nikes. I am wearing old boots. A long and awkward moment passes between us.

I ask Hatfield how closely he monitors the competition. Adidas, after all, is going space-age, too. Does it worry him?

"When you're busy aggressively going into the future, you don't have to worry who's behind you," he says. "If somebody happens to pass us, it's just because they're a better-" here he pauses and corrects course-"because we didn't do the right thing. Pretty hard to pass us right now, because we train, I think, in a pretty smart way."

Before leaving campus, I sit down with Leo Chang, the basketball design director and the man charged with keeping Nike dominant in the NBA. Chang, longhaired and soft-spoken, is only 35; he joined Nike as an intern a decade and a half ago. He has since graduated to overseeing

the top three signature sneaker lines among active players-LeBron, Durant, and Kobeand is, in his own sphere, as much of a titan as they are.

Our meeting takes place in a conference room in the Mia Hamm Building; Chang sweeps in wearing a black duster coat and clutching a grocery bag full of shoes. He upends the bag: A Technicolor assortment of the

new KD8s cascade onto the table. Aside from the LeBron line, Kevin Durant's signature kicks are Nike's single biggest individual earner, with a 2014 haul of \$195 million.

Now, suddenly, I am one of the few human beings besides the Kitchen staff to see the shoes.

"These don't have the logos on them," Chang says. "We were trying to keep it tight, so they don't leak." He leans toward me. "There's people everywhere that are trying to get that first peek. It's ridiculous. It's changed the way we work."

The KD7s, released last summer, had a forefront strap that could be worn down, over the laces, or up, like a middle finger. The 8's are sleeker, meaner, lighter looking. The uppers are woven of a kind of rubberized yarn, similar to the Flyknits'; the soles sport a brand-new articulated ten-millimeter-thick Zoom Air "bag"designer-speak for the translucent sac native to the Air line.

Chang geeks out on materials and science for the next ten minutes solid, no interruptions. He talks about high-performance foams and lateral force. He talks about a

triangular feature on the reinforced heel cup, which is meant to look like the fang of a saber-toothed tiger, a saber-toothed tiger being the subject of Kevin Durant's latest calf tattoo and apparently an animal dear to his heart.

He rattles off the various color combinations that will be available, which will include "fun, bright colors. But KD also likes things that are a little bit more sophisticated and grown-up, so we want to be able to show that breadth and show that character of him."

I stare at the shoes and sit on my hands: They are too pretty to touch. Eventually, Chang stuffs the prototypes into the bag, and I walk with one of the PR guys to the front entrance.

A few weeks after I return home, Nike releases an avalanche of new shoes: a \$200 pair of "laser orange" LeBrons, an "Independence Day" run of the Kobe X's with stars on the toes, and a limited-edition version of its Huarache Premiums, coated in an iridescent finish that makes the shoes glow like tiger beetles. Through the summer they will keep coming, a mix of major

"I have all the respect in the world for a competitor like Nike, but they don't intimidate us in any manner, because they're heavy, they're big, they're oversaturated in the market, and I think people are looking for a change."

> Nikes and blog-bait limited editions. The KD8 will drop to great acclaim, and teaser photos will emerge of a new Tech Fleece footwear line, a sneaker series using the same cozy fabric as swoosh sweatshirts. Nike will also star in *The Rise of Sneaker* Culture, a 150-pair summer exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum that officially canonizes the sneaker as art.

> But for now, there is just the Nike campus, majestic in its quiet. The golfing green, where Tiger Woods once drove a ball so far that it nearly shattered the windows of the Roger Federer Building, glows like an emerald. We pass a display devoted to the evolution of the Air Jordan line and a hall named for Steve Prefontaine, a pupil of Nike co-founder and track coach Bill Bowerman, and the first genuine Nike star.

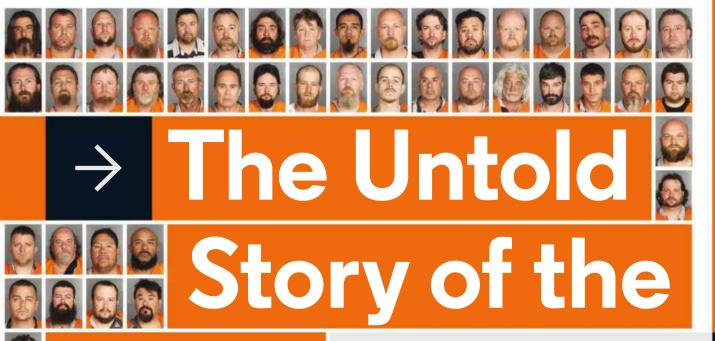
> Inside are shoes and jerseys worn by Pre and an old quote from the master runner himself: "Somebody may beat me, but they are going to have to bleed to do it."

MATTHEW SHAER'S last article for GQ, "The Orthodox Hit Squad," appeared in the September 2014 issue.



Introducing Stouffer's* Fit Kitchen. Six hearty, satisfying meals with over 25 grams of protein, perfect for a balanced lifestyle. Try one today.





Texas

It was supposed to be a quiet meeting of regional clubs at a local Waco breastaurant. Instead, nine men were killed, 20 were wounded, and 177 wound up in jail. Was it a turf war gone mad? Or a botched police response? NATHANIEL PENN reports on how the bloodiest day in biker history went down

Biker Gang

Shoot-Out







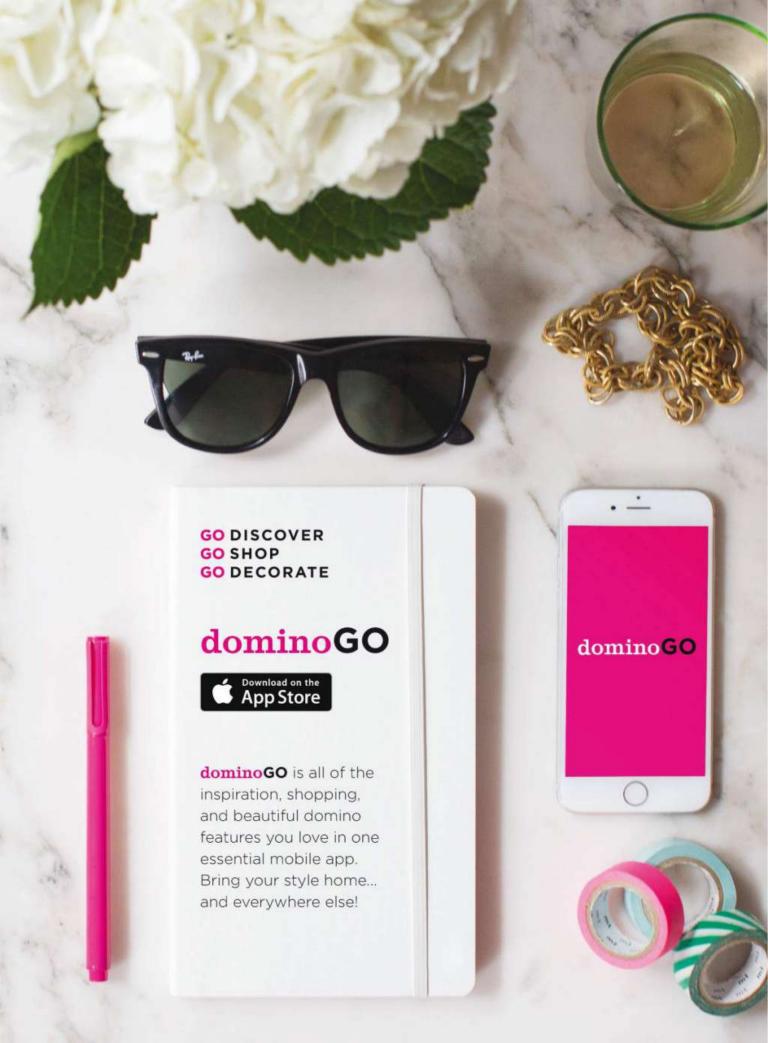
THE TWIN PEAKS CHAIN is the most successful of America's post-Hooters wave of so-called breastaurants. ("Hooters," the co-founder of Twin Peaks has said, "wasn't racy enough.") Flirty waitresses wear skimpy mountaineering outfits: tiny khaki shorts, midriff-baring plaid shirts, climbing boots. A sign outside promises EATS * DRINKS * SCENIC VIEWS.

Though it had been open less than a year, the Twin Peaks in Waco was already a popular spot for Thursday



G Q I N T E L L I G E N C E

CLASH



Biker Nights. The Texas Confederation of Clubs and Independents-a kind of United Nations General Assembly for local motorcycle clubs-had never held its bimonthly meeting at Twin Peaks before, but the organization's state chairman was returning from a national convention, and he wanted to speak to as many Texas bikers as possible about various legislative initiatives. Waco is situated between Dallas and Austin, two of the most populous biker cities in Texas.

Afterward-after nine bikers were shot dead, 20 were wounded, and an unprecedented 177 people from at least five different clubs wound up in police custody-the Waco Police Department would claim that the bloodbath was triggered by the Bandidos and the Cossacks, a pair of rival "outlaw motorcycle gangs" (OMGs in law-enforcement vernacular), beefing over the things that OMGs tend to beef over: territory, respect. Months later, though, the Waco P.D. was still suppressing any video footage and ballistic analysis that could offer proof. Some of the 177 arrested (including four women) languished in jail for weeks, others for months, before they could afford to post bail. All of them, even guys who hid out in the bathroom while bullets flew, face up to 99 years in jail.

These bimonthly confederation meetings, known as COC meetings, are mostly arcane discussions of motorcycle-rights issues. They have zero history of violence. Then again, they have virtually zero history of Cossack participation. In fact, May 17 marked only the second time in memory any of the club's members had ever attended a COC meeting; for years, they'd refused to join the organization-a direct rebuke to the Bandidos, Texas's most powerful motorcycle club and one of the nation's largest, with more than 2,000 members. But things had been ugly between the two rivals for a while-fistfights, knife fights, roadside beatings. Infrequent, but growing in brutality.

As a general rule, bikers are not big talkers. It's an insular and suspicious world, especially in Texas, especially now, in the hazy aftermath of the bloodiest day in the often sensationalized history of American biker clubs. Nevertheless, all the Cossacks interviewed by GQ for this story insist they showed up that morning to make peace. And virtually every biker I spoke with last June and July-Cossacks, Bandidos, members of multiple other clubs, 22 bikers in total-believes that the real blame for all the dead bodies belongs with the Waco police.

Anonymous Cossack #1*: We had almost 70 men, and we showed up at the same time, because we don't like being left on the road in small groups, because of what's been happening. We went in and ordered drinks

Vincent Glenn (officer, Waco P.D., from an affidavit dated June 15): The Cossacks and their support clubs took over the patio area, which is the exact area of the restaurant that was reserved for the [COC] meeting.

Anonymous motorcycle-club member: We noticed all the Cossacks sitting on the patio. We gave respect to them, them being a bigger group and having so many people there.

Anonymous Cossack #1: A group of seven Bandidos rolled up on bikes, furious that we were parking up front. They hit one of our prospects, an older guy-ran over his foot.

Reginald Weathers (Bandidos, from court testimony at his bail hearing): My president and vice president tried to back in, and immediately the Cossacks on the porch came out and started pushing their bikes [away], saying they couldn't park there. [Cossacks] kept coming off the patio, over the fence-60 to 100 guys. They were yelling at my president [and] my vice president.

Glenn (from his affidavit): Several of the Cossacks pulled their weapons, including handguns.

Anonymous Cossack #1: Of course, we're not gonna back down. We're men. One of our sergeants at arms-our guys in charge of security-said, "We can take our cuts [vests with club patches] off right now, and you and I can fight." The guy says, "No, we're not doin' that." Our sergeant at arms says, "Then let's go in and have a beer and talk about it."

John Wilson (Cossacks Motorcycle Club, McLennan County chapter president): It looked like it was all going to calm down.

Anonymous Cossack #2: And then somebody, I think it was a Bandido, said, "Don't talk to my president that way."

Weathers (from court testimony): I said, "I don't think you need to talk to my president like that." I didn't think it was very respectful. He hit me. My head got pulled down. There was a crowd of guys, and I couldn't see anything.

Anonymous Cossack #2: Fists flew, and it was game on. They went to the ground. Seconds later, I heard bang!

The Bandidos vs. The Cossacks

The Bandidos are terrorists. They execute people.-Jon "Hondo" Moses, Cossacks, Hill County chapter

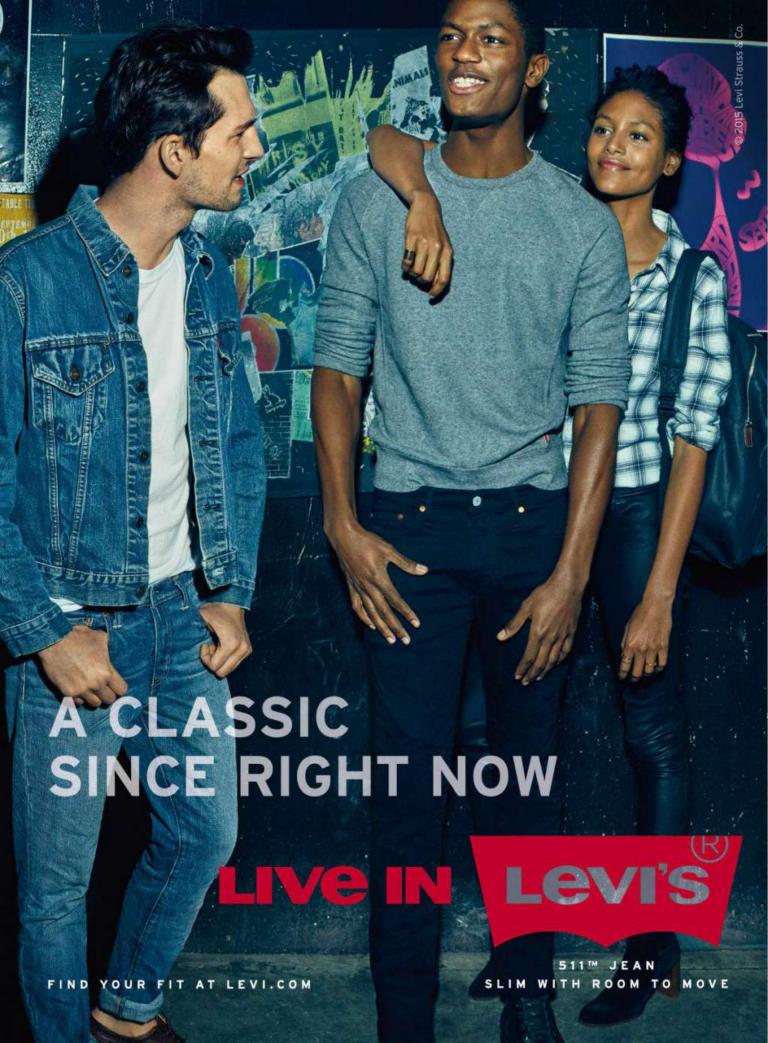
The Cossacks are a bunch of inbred cornfed dumb fucking hillbillies. That's my personal fucking opinion on those stupid asses. -anonymous Bandido

THE BANDIDOS WERE baptized in blood. They were founded in 1966 by an ex-Marine and Vietnam vet named Don Chambers, whose road name was Mother and who led the club until 1972, when he and two other men were convicted of double murder. They abducted two drug dealers who'd cheated the Bandidos on a meth deal, forced the dealers to dig their own graves in the Texas desert, then shot them and set fire to their bodies. Chambers's three successors were all taken down by

· Bodies of slain bikers lie where they fell in the Twin Peaks parking lot.



^{*}At the request of some interviewees, certain names and/ or identifying details have been changed or withheld.





· Roadblock (with mic) of the Zealots motorcycle club takes roll call at a COC meeting in Frankston, Texas.

the feds for a variety of offenses. During the 1970s, '80s, and '90s, the Bandidos did everything the feds continue to accuse them of doing today, including trafficking in narcotics and prostitution. But there hasn't been a major Bandidos bust since 2011, when 39 club members and associates were arrested in Dallas, San Antonio, and Denver on gun and drug charges. Jeff Pike, the club's publicity-shy current president, has held office-mostly quietly-since 2005. "The '60s are over," one Bandido insisted to me.

Most bikers today, in Texas and elsewhere, are community-minded law-andorder Republicans-the less affluent, more racially diverse descendants of the Elks and the Knights of Columbus. This includes Bandidos. But as "one-percenters," the Bandidos also exist in a category apart from most other clubs. More of a boast than an admission of criminal intent, "onepercenter" is a reference to a long-ago line attributed to the American Motorcyclist Association that 99 percent of motorcycle owners are decent, law-abiding citizens. It's unclear whether the Bandidos are, as the feds continue to insist, an organized-crime enterprise, but it is likely that they tolerate a minority of members who are criminals and who use their brothers' loyalty as cover. When I asked one Bandido whether his chapter would kick out a brother who was engaging in criminal activity, he replied cautiously: "It would be the best thing to do."

Today, as the dominant club in Texas, the Bandidos enforce order among the state's thousands of bikers. "I have personally been around the Bandidos for thousands of hours and have never known them to be violent," says Steve Cochran, founder and vice president of Sons of the South and a prominent spokesman for the Texas biker community. "There are certain responsibilities as the dominant club that you have to attend to. And one of those things is to disallow knuckleheads, like what showed up at Twin Peaks, to destroy the motorcycle-riding community in the state and to disallow their ability to function."

Much less is known about the Cossacks, except that they were founded in 1969 in East Texas, and they are growing rapidly. They claim a current membership of about 800 members, which would make them the second-biggest club in Texas after the Bandidos.

Over the past two years, the Bandidos and Cossacks appear to have been engaged in a simmering power struggle. In November 2013, two Cossacks were stabbed in a roadhouse parking lot in Abilene; the president of the local Bandidos chapter was arrested in connection with the assault. Earlier this year, on March 22, Cossacks allegedly forced a Bandido rider off I-35 in Lorena and beat him so brutally-with chains and metal pipes-that he nearly lost an eye. At a gas station in Mingus that same day, Bandidos confronted the Cossack son of a local politician and demanded that he remove the Texas "rocker," or badge, from his cut. When he refused, they allegedly attacked him with a hammer. The FBI and members of both clubs believe several additional clashes were never reported.

Steve Cochran (co-founder and vice president, Sons of the South): There are no Bandidos in Waco. The Cossacks arrived on the scene three or four years ago. They started flexing on all the other clubs in the area. They would claim they own Waco. They would harass all the other motorcycle clubs: "You can't ride here. This is our town."

John Wilson (Cossacks): We never told anybody that Waco was a Cossack town, that nobody else was allowed to ride here. We were welcomed by all the different establishments. The only club that had a problem with

us didn't have a chapter here. There was a Bandidos chapter in Waco, oh, probably 12 years ago, but those guys were involved in a murder in a local bar, and after that, they got shut down.

Anonymous Bandido #2: Some Cossacks might be Klan members. They wear the lightning

Wilson: I don't know if anybody actually ever said S.S. lightning bolts were outlawed, but there are no white-supremacist patches allowed. If some guy sewed one on, he might not have got called on it yet.

Anonymous Cossack #1: The

Bandidos invited us to [the COC meeting at Twin Peaks]. That's why we were there earlier than any other club. We were told, "This meeting is about us stopping all this crap." The agreement was made by a Bandido named Marshall Mitchell.

Marshall Mitchell (Bandidos): That's a lie. That is an absolute lie. They were never invited. Categorically absolute b.s. You can ask any motorcycle club in the world. You never bring 60 people to a meeting [as the Cossacks did; the Bandidos had about 20]. It's three people and three people, or two people and two people, and that's the way it is.

Glenn (from his affidavit): A Waco gangintelligence officer learned that the Cossacks were upset that the Bandidos changed the location of the [May 17 COC] meeting to "their territory." The Cossacks made the decision to take a stand and attend the meeting uninvited.

12:24 P.M., MAY 17, 2015 TWIN PEAKS RESTAURANT WACO, TEXAS

THE POLICE WERE already there as the rest of the clubs arrived that morning. "They're circling like buzzards on a dead deer," one biker told me. "I look at the people I was riding with, and I said, 'This don't look right." Afterward, said the Cossacks' John Wilson, "a Waco spokesman was touting the quick 40-second response time of the police, when that was obviously false. They were here."

The bikers believe this provides a clue to the Waco P.D.'s ongoing silence: The cops know their response was overzealous, possibly unlawful, and now they're covering it up. Some bikers believe there's an even more sinister explanation: that a firefight of some kind was *supposed* to happen—that it was







· Elder, top; Switch (left) and Taz. The Desperados and Los Miradores are both "support clubs," or allies, of the Bandidos.

all part of a plan by the Waco P.D. to provoke bitter rivals into a public brawl that could be violently crushed and then used as a basis for sweeping RICO indictments.

"We basically walked into an ambush," says the Cossacks' Jon "Hondo" Moses. "The die was cast as soon as we rode into that parking lot."

Wilson: I didn't see who fired the first shot. I was told it was a Bandido firing into the ground, trying to break up a fistfight.

Anonymous Cossack #2: I thought it was just a warning shot from somebody. I was dazed. I stood in place. I thought they had fired a gun in the air to make everything stop.

Anonymous Cossack #1: I felt a concussion from the pistol. It was a black semiautomatic

Anonymous motorcycle-club member: We heard a pop. Then a few more pops. Your feet start to act. There's pops from the rear, from the front, on the far side. It's like being in a war zone.

Anonymous Cossack #2: I heard projectiles zinging past me, but I didn't hear no gun going off. It was either a silenced weapon or a very suppressed weapon in the distance. I've never been so scared in my life.

Unidentified Waco P.D. officer #1 (from radio traffic): Dispatch units soonest-Twin Peaks! Shots fired, several people down!

Anonymous Cossack #1: One [shot] killed Richie, our regional sergeant at arms. Another went through the neck of our sergeant at arms. This Bandido jumped off his bike and attacked him. He was beatin' the crap out of my S.A., right? He had gloves with lead in 'em. But when my S.A. got on top of him-he's a good ol' boy-this other Bandido came up from behind with a pistol and shot him in the neck. Well, we assume he was a Bandido-he wasn't with us. * My S.A. lived. He was very lucky. I pulled myself in underneath my motorcycle, making myself as small a target as possible. I was just breathing and hoping it would end soon. I just kept hearing shots. Long-distance.

Anonymous motorcycle-club member: Now, the first two or three pops-me and half my crew being ex-military, we know what smallarms fire from pistols sounds like. We also know what squad automatic weapons [typically used by the military and law enforcement] sound like. After the third pop, it was nothing but squad automatic weapons.

Anonymous Cossack #1: I got shot, and I didn't know it until it started burning. I looked down and saw a hole. It was bleeding pretty bad. I wadded my shirt and held it and yelled out, "I'm hit!" Then I saw Diesel [a fellow Cossack] get shot in the forehead. He also took cover next to me. He wasn't shooting or nothing.

Anonymous Cossack #2: I watched the top of Diesel's head come off and land on another dude's jeans. I was probably ten yards away from where it happened. And his son was standing right there beside him and watched it happen. Watched his dad die. Another brother of mine had a gut-shot hole I could've stuck my thumb in. He had Diesel's brains on his pant leg.

Weathers (from court testimony): I was shot, I have no clue by who. It went through my right arm into my chest. I'm on a blood thinner, so it's a big deal to get hit. I ran for the other side of the vehicles parked near the Don Carlos Mexican restaurant to find some cover.

Anonymous Cossack #2: I'd guess the shooting lasted two to three minutes, but when you got bullets flying over your head, three minutes is a long time. I will never forget any of that. Nothing I'd seen in the Marines had really prepared you for that. I have a couple of friends in the Cossacks who've done three tours in Iraq. They're like, "I've never seen no shit like this before."

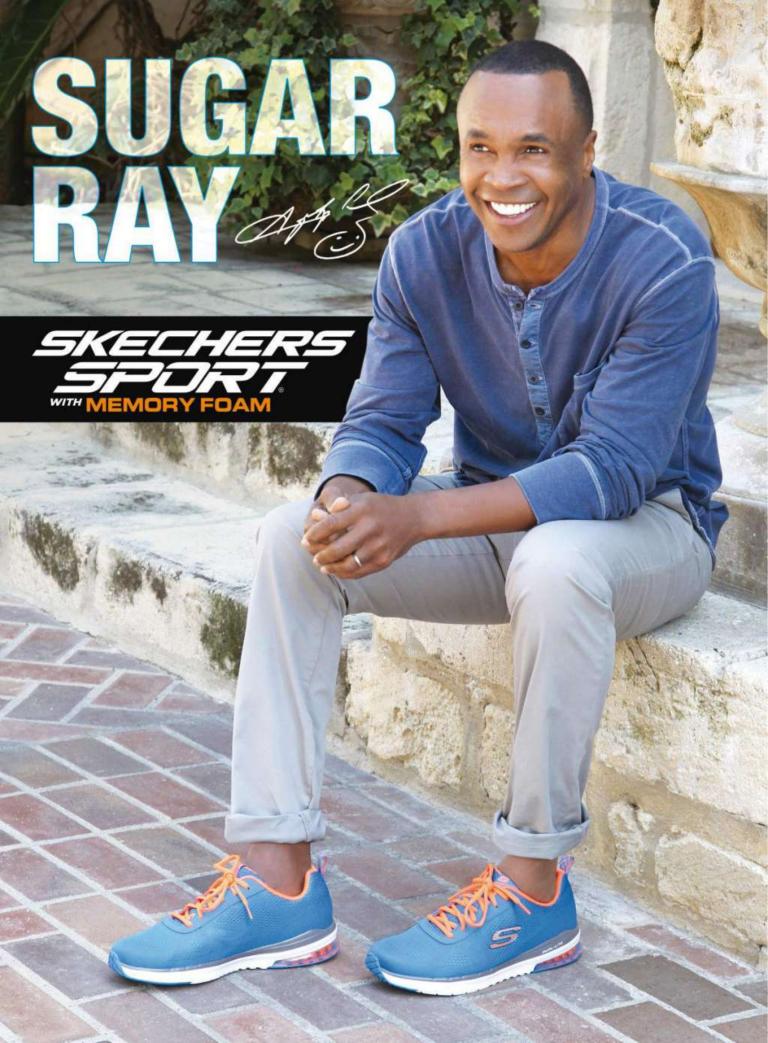
Unidentified Waco P.D. officer #2 (from radio traffic): Do not send an ambulance! Have 'em stage [nearby]. This place is hot!

Wilson: The police rounded everybody up and marched us out and through the carnage in the parking lot. We were detained, but we weren't cuffed. We were just sitting there and trying to take care of our wounded. Bear was shot in the abdomen and the legs. Rattle Can was shot in his torso, and he was bleeding bad and had even started to convulse while he was there on the ground while officers stood around with rifles pointed at us. Rattle Can was laying there in a lot of pain, and my son and others were over there, trying to stick bandannas in bullet holes. He was able to talk for a while, but before they picked him up, he had slipped into unconsciousness. That's really all I want to say about that.

Anonymous Cossack #1: I was losing a lot of blood. I started to lose consciousness at that point. A member of the Boozefighters came up and helped me. He ignored the protocols of "stay with your club"; he must have been an EMT or first responder. He told the guy to apply pressure, took shirts off and whatnot. He was saving lives.

Wilson: Not a single law-enforcement person lifted a finger to help any of the wounded. And they made it pretty clear that they were going to be violent if we tried to take our guys to the ambulance. Three men were bleeding out before our eyes. If those men were still alive 30, 40 minutes after being shot, they could have been saved. A prospect named Trainer from out of Tarrant County chapter was shot. They zip-tied him and laid him on the ground next to a Bandido they had handcuffed. I noticed him jerk a few times, laying there. We were sitting there, 30 feet from him, and weren't able to help him. About two hours later, somebody walked over, looked at him, and covered him with a yellow sheet.

^{*}Bandido or not, this biker has yet to be identified.



The Waco P.D.

SERGEANT PATRICK SWANTON, the Waco Police Department's affably officious spokesman, gave seven press conferences in the first three days after the shootings. He became a minor media celebrity.

With so little evidence available to the public, Swanton had complete control of the narrative, and he took the opportunity to declare, repeatedly, that the COC meeting at Twin Peaks had been a criminal gathering and that every biker who attended was a gang member. When a reporter observed that many bikers had disputed these claims, Swanton was dismissive. "They lied," he said. The dead men ranged in age from 27 to 65: seven Cossacks, one Bandido, and one unaffiliated biker—the 65-year-old—who was an ex-Marine recipient of the Purple Heart for service in Vietnam.

By his final press conference, Swanton seemed to be struggling to defend his early characterizations of the clubs. A reporter asked, "Can you please respond to criticism...that not all 170 [jailed bikers] are criminals, that a lot of [them] are totally innocent and had nothing to do with the shooting?" "No, I can't respond to that," Swanton shot back, then hastily moved on. For a while, Swanton continued posting press releases about the shootings on the Waco P.D.'s Facebook page, but all of them have since been deleted.

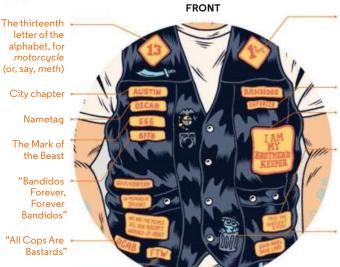
The Texas Department of Public Safety did its part to ramp up hysteria, leaking a "confidential bulletin" to CNN alleging that Bandidos in active military service were arming their chapters with grenades and C4 explosives so that they could retaliate against the police. One of the DPS's sources was a club called the Black Widows, which does not exist except in the 1978 movie Every Which Way But Loose. In response, one biker blog jeered: "Waco Police Now Claim They Are Being Attacked by Clint Eastwood and An Orangutan Named Clyde."

Any attempt to try to piece together exactly how the nine bikers died—whose guns fired the fatal shots—requires wading into JFK-assassination levels of paranoia and confusion. For instance, members of multiple clubs have claimed that when the shooting started, two Cossacks stood up inside the restaurant, took off their cuts, and put on badges. Were they undercover cops waiting for a fight to break out, and if so, did they play a part in instigating it? Other witnesses have said that a Waco cop wearing a Cossacks cut was firing shots, then helped make arrests afterward.

According to Waco police chief Brent Stroman, only three of his 16 officers discharged their weapons, firing a total of 12 rounds. But eyewitnesses dispute that figure, as does the owner of the adjacent

Patches 101: What Does "ACAB" Mean?

Bikers take their patches very seriously. And many patches mean different things to different clubs. Here's a taxonomy of the ones whose origins we could decode.—BENJY HANSEN-BUNDY



As distinct from the 99 percent of bikers who are law-abiding

Rank or title

Genesis 4:9, paraphrased

Protesting the steep bail bonds and glacial processing of the Waco D.A.

Minimum 15 pieces of personal flair. We want you to express yourself, okay?

Collectively
the back
patches are
known as
the "colors."
This is the
"top rocker."

"Fuck the

World'

The "bottom rocker" claims the club's territory. According to some accounts, a dispute over the right to wear the Texas rocker might've helped provoke the shoot-out.



It's rumored that Bandidos founder Don Chambers chose this "fat Mexican" insignia to be more racially inclusive than the then predominantly white Hells Angels. It's clumsy and racially tonedeaf, but the Bandidos do have many Hispanic members.

"Motorcycle Club"

Don Carlos restaurant, who has claimed that "thousands of bullet rounds" were fired. Could it be that the department's numbers don't include shots from its undercover officers? And if the bikers were firing at police, as alleged, why hasn't the Waco P.D. released any hard evidence to prove it?

"Harried handgun fights are usually a pretty inaccurate situation," says Cossacks chapter president John Wilson. "Head shots happen by mistake, if at all. Someone got lucky. To have that many guys hit with torso

shots and head shots—in my experience, I would say that indicates you had trained people with long rifles and optical sights. That's accurate, aimed fire."*

A rival Bandido, who declined to be named, reached the same conclusion: "Seven of the nine [dead] were head shots or chest shots. Who trains for that? *Who?*"

^{*}The DPS declined an interview request. Swanton cordially e-mailed to say he would "touch base" with me the following morning, then melted away.





FALL/ WINTER LINEUP

MOST EXPENSIVEST SHIT 53

Rapper 2 Chainz returns to discover the most outrageously expensive things, people, and services in the world.

COVER VIDEOS

A behind-the-scenes look at the creative process behind a *GQ* cover, with footage of the shoot and a video interview with the cover celebrity.

FASHION TRIBES

This documentary dives deep into various extreme fashion subcultures including everything from Rick Owen Passionates to The Good Smellas to Low Heads.

GO NOV

Hosts Will Welch and Mark Anthony Green give their weekly breakdown of all things GQ—including male culture and lifestyle.

THE GRIND

Profiles individuals at the very top of their respective fields, focusing on the habits and work ethics that keep them there.

SNEAKERHEADZ

Examines the cultural influence of sneaker collecting around the world, exploring a subculture whose proud members don't just want to admire art—they want to wear it.



· Soldiers for Jesus president Woody Woodward; the Comanche Warriors of Athens, Texas.

The Waco 177

THE VOLUME OF ARRESTS at Twin Peaks completely overwhelmed the city's criminal-processing system. Many of the Waco 177 waited days to be provided with a lawyer while the desperate court system sought help from neighboring cities. "Like if you were in a fast-food restaurant and three buses pulled up," a local judge named Billy Ray Stubblefield told the Waco Tribune, "and all the kids want their food just as fast as they normally do."

It's still unclear why so many of the bikers were arrested in the first place, when it appears that so few of them were actually involved in the shoot-out. Three bikers were arrested despite arriving after the shooting stopped; Swanton later said it was because they were carrying gunslegally, as it later appeared—and because they were "wearing the colors of criminal gang members."

Swanton, meanwhile, is now trying to parlay his elevated profile into a run for county sheriff.

Wilson: We were lined up and zip-tied, had our shoes taken from us and our belts and anything in our pockets. We were taken to the Waco Convention Center, where we were set on the floor, and we spent the next 18 or so hours there.

Anonymous motorcycle-club member: They ask me to identify my belongings that are in a big old pile of shit. It's like 177 bags, no names on them.

Matt Clendennen (Scimitars Motorcycle Club): Chair, floor-wherever we could find to sleep is where we slept, with our hands tied behind our backs. I didn't sleep much.

Anonymous motorcycle-club member: At two or three in the morning, I had my zip ties popped off for about four minutes so that I could pee. Then they put a new set on, just as tight, and brought us a piece of fried chicken and a little bitty cup of water. Have you ever tried to eat something with your hands behind your back?

Wilson: They took our clothes and put us in jail uniforms and stood us in front of a camera and told us we were on a \$1 million bond and snapped our picture. I was in shock. The vast, vast majority of those people committed no crime. I kept thinking, There's some mistake.

Anonymous Cossack #2: To get out on a \$1 million bond, it'll cost \$100,000. How many people can just pull that out of their pocket?

Wilson: I was in jail 28 days. My son was in for 37. We're not wealthy people, so it took a lot longer for him to get his bond reduced.

Anonymous Cossack #2: I was in for 27 days. We had our bad moments, you know, when we'd get off the phone from talking to our wives or loved ones and be very down.

Wilson: Some of these guys were on PTSD medications that they were denied in jail. One of our guys was ten months out of Afghanistan, and it was very hard on him. I saw him break down several times.

Anonymous Cossack #2: They dropped my bond down to \$250,000. My lawyer screamed and screamed; they dropped it down to \$65,000. Here's my wife trying to raise up 10 percent to get me out of jail, and I only got to talk to her once a day for 15 minutes.

Clendennen: When I got out, I was in a hurry to pick my son up on his last day of school. My wife told him I was on a business trip, because he's 4 years old and his understanding of going to jail is you've done something wrong. We have a minivan, and my wife opened the door, and I was sitting in the backseat. He was surprised and

overjoyed and confused all at the same time. The next morning, I had to get back to my job. When he woke up, he was real upset that I wasn't there. It hit him real heavy. He was thinking I was going to be gone again.

Anonymous Cossack #2: We have one guy that was a United Airlines pilot. For years. He lost his whole career.

Anonymous motorcycle-club member: When you get out of jail after being gone for 30 days, you don't have a job anymore. I got fired. Nobody wants to hire an electrician with a class 1 felony charge pending above his head.

The Waco Justice System

"THE CITY OF WACO is looking at paying out hundreds of millions of dollars," says Michael White, Wilson's attorney. "I don't think we've ever seen something on the scale of 175-plus people being arrested for something they did not do." To survive the storm, the city's legal strategy seems to be to pressure the Waco 177 into pleading guilty to minor infractions for time served; this would preclude the bikers from being able to sue for wrongful imprisonment.

Justice of the peace Walter "Pete" Peterson's across-the-board imposition of \$1 million bonds—"to send a message," he said-was almost certainly illegal. Waco P.D. officer Manuel Chavez later admitted in court that Peterson signed all 177 of the so-called cookie-cutter probable-cause affidavits in bulk, without specifying the evidence against each individual defendant. Peterson, it turns out, is a former state trooper with no legal training.

Nevertheless, the Waco 177 still have their work cut out for them. The judge in the case, Matt Johnson, is the former law partner of district attorney Abel Reyna. Incredibly, the foreman of the first grand jury to be convened, James Head, is a Waco P.D. detective. "He was chosen totally at random, like the law says," Reyna insisted to local reporters. If this seems brazen, consider that the commission to appoint jurors was originally going to be led by Reyna's own father. Reyna only backed down under pressure, acquiescing to the process that led to Head's selection. Asked why he'd permit an active police officer to lead a grand jury investigating possible police misconduct, state district judge Ralph Strother said, "I just thought, 'Well, he's qualified. He knows the criminal-justice system."

On his first day as a grand juror, Head wore his badge and service pistol. Later, when a reporter asked him if he'd taken part in the Waco operation, Head responded: "Not really."

NATHANIEL PENN is a GQ correspondent.

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ABOUT THESE CLOTHES

The Rising Big Shot's Guide to Dressing All Casual

First, Get a Good Tailor

You can't be a big shot without a go-to suit guy (and a jeweler). But a shirt and tie in L.A.? Nah. This sporty striped pullover packs all the spiffiness, none of the stiffness.

2. Leave Your

Sneakerhead Days Behind Gaudy limited-edition kicks might be cool for stunting on your friends, but they're also a sign of delayed adolescence. Maturity calls for minimalism.

>>

suit \$3,770 **Prada**

zip-neck \$575 **Michael Bastian** sneakers \$170

Axel Arigato
bracelet
Tiffany & Co.

location The Rose Hotel, Venice, California

STAY COOL (MOSTLY).

Nearly everything Michael B. Jordan does—in public, in the media—is done pretty smoothly, as though there are few things he prioritizes more than presenting an unruffled sheen and a dignified poise. But sometimes it's hard. We have arranged to meet for dinner at a well-regarded restaurant on Manhattan's Lower East Side, a place recommended to him by his manager. "I'm a foodie," he'll tell me, "so wherever the good food is..."

I arrive first, and when I ask for the "table-for-two for Jordan," I am instantly led there. Jordan arrives about 15 minutes later, and I can see him talking to the

greeter. And standing there. And standing there some more, a kind of fixed expression on his face. He has to wait for a couple of minutes before, eventually, they lead him over. "That's a whole other thing," he says to me when I ask him what just happened, as if he's trying not to look as annoyed as he clearly is. As though he thinks whatever just took place fits all too neatly into a pattern that a successful black man has to endure as he traverses this world. (The kind of world, for instance, whose Internet bubbles with thinly veiled racist indignation when a fine young actor is cast as a make-believe comic-book superhero-Fantastic Four's Johnny Storm-who has previously been drawn as white.) And as though he didn't get to where he is now without learning a lesson or two about restraint.

Up to a point, anyway. He's only human. Just how annoyed Jordan actually is becomes clear a little later on, after he is brought his first tequila-and-cucumber cocktail, when he takes a sideways kind of retribution. He has a first sip, then realizes

that this was not a fair taste test—he still has his chewing gum in his mouth. Removing it, he makes a swift decision, one that I only half-see. "Right under the table," he declares. A wide grin. "Classy. I'm classy, okay?"

A little surprised—and not wanting to get it wrong—I ask him whether he really did stick his gum under there.

"Fuck, yeah, goddamn right I did," he says. "They made me wait outside for no reason. I'm from north New Jersey, bro. I come from nothing. I come from sleeping in the kitchen with my family with the oven open to keep us warm during winter, you know? When you come from that background, all this extra stuff is just...extra stuff, you know? If somebody's not real with you, you can tell."

STAY SINGLE (MOSTLY).

Last week, Jordan bought his first house. He'll be living alone for the first time, apart from a few months solo when he first arrived in Los Angeles as a teenager. "You know, you can't have a roommate forever," Jordan says. "I'm 28. You know, just coming into my own."

If all goes to plan, *Creed*—a resurrection of the *Rocky* franchise one generation on, with Jordan as Apollo Creed's son and Sylvester Stallone as his trainer—will only increase Jordan's public profile. This is something that he insists, for all his ambition, he's very uncomfortable with. "I hate it," he says. "I'm a quiet guy. I'm very to myself. Don't like attention. I'm getting a lot more now. I'm extremely quiet, bro." He echoes what he said earlier. "All the extra shit is extra shit, you know." And then, unbidden, he clarifies what he considers part of the extra shit. "The females," he says, "they'll always be there. Like, honestly, bro, oh my God. Female-wise now? I ain't got to do too much work. And it's weird, because I'm the same guy. I haven't fucking changed, right? I haven't done anything different." He pauses, reconsiders this. "Okay,

maybe a blockbuster film."

 $I\,think\,that\,makes\,a\,difference.$

"So crazy, isn't it?"

So how do girls, or women, fit into your life right now?

"Um, I try and be focused. I told myself at a young age that I would sacrifice all my twenties to my work. I'm 28. I've got a year and a half."

And have you pretty much stuck to that?

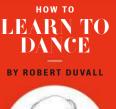
"Yes."

So you've never had serious—? He interrupts me. "No. No." Is that a good thing?

"I don't know the answer to that. I'm pretty sure the women won't say that's good, but for me it's like I can't have any regrets and I have to know that I gave everything I had to making my family okay. At the end of the day that's all that matters to me is my family, bro. They're not good, I'm not good. My mid-thirties, I can live a little. And I'm so okay with that. I'm cool with that."

I'm guessing you might have come across a girl or two who didn't agree with this agenda.

(text continued on page 253)





The biggest mistake is doing too much. I'd rather see an old guy do a few elegant steps than a person jump all over. And it's not sexual. It's sensuous. A great dancer once told me the tango is beautiful, lovely, pretty. He didn't say it was like Sex.—AS TOLD TO CLAY SKIPPER

The Oscar-winning actor has been a tango aficionado for decades.







WE KNOW WHAT WE *Should* Eat, and what we're *tempted* to eat, but there's a chasm in between. And in that gap exists a promised land of deliciousness where heart-healthy and pan-fried live in harmony. Where you get to eat overstuffed tacos and carbs—sweet, beautiful carbs—yet still high-five your physician. Now come, take our hand, our advice, and a bite of this fritto misto. It's okay, we promise







THE VERDICT

IS IN: We need to eat healthier. More veggies, more lean meat. less chemistryset junk. And we're into that—we iust need some inspiration. Luckily, the country's most interesting chefs are on our side, reinventing the idea of "healthy" until it rhymes with "damn tasty." So we stole their favorite no-regrets recipes and techniques. Now go use 'em to make a mindblowing meal out of something green (or red, or purplish, or all three).







• The next time you're hacking away at a beet (or radish, or turnip, or rutabaga), save the scraps. Brooks Headley, chef at Superiority Burger in N.Y.C., says they're actually your ticket to a full plate of mouthwatering sides.—DEBBIE LEE

Breaded Beet Greens

"Chop raw beet greens and toss them in a smoking-hot pan for one minute, until they're gently scorched, then transfer to a bowl and season with salt, ground black pepper, and a sprinkle of chile flakes for heat. Dress lightly with olive oil and a splash of white-wine vinegar. Add a pinch of fine breadcrumbs-made yourself with good stale bread—and toss everything to coat the barely cooked, chewy leaves. The rest of the beet? Roast the root. Pickle the stems. You're using what others toss, so you can feel a little virtuous if you want, man."

SAY GOOD NIGHT TO EATING GARBAGE

• One unexpected downside of shorting yourself on sleep is that it makes you eat like a college freshman. Even one night without proper rest turns us into junk-food zombies.

Our bodies crave sugary, fatty foods; our brains balk at considering the cons of double-fisting Oreos. Turns out the most important meal of the day is actually bedtime.—JON WILDE

MEET YOUR SALAD'S NEW HERO Black-Garlic Vinaigrette

• Eating healthier somehow, inevitably, involves salad. And a salad lives or dies by what's poured on top. Tal Ronnen, chef at L.A.'s Crossroads and author of a just-released cookbook with the same name, understands. He believes in "plant-based cuisine"—cough, he's vegan—but no carnivore would leave his restaurant whining about rabbit food. Ronnen's darker, deeper vinaigrette is one reason why: It uses black garlic—an aged version of gardenvariety garlic, and available at balsajo.com—to build in the tart-smoky-sweet, umami-rich flavors that hit your meateater pleasure receptors. You could pour it on a pound of raw spinach and go back for seconds.—BESHA RODELL





Black-Garlic Vinaigrette MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

½ cup white balsamic

vinegar

74 cup fresh flat-leaf parsley, coarsely chopped

6 black-garlic cloves 2 sprigs fresh thyme,

2 sprigs fresh thyme leaves stripped

from the stems 1 shallot, coarsely chopped

1 tsp. agave nectar

½ tsp. kosher salt

1/8 tsp. freshly ground black pepper Pinch red-pepper flakes

34 cup extra-virgin olive oil

DIRECTIONS

1. In the bowl of a food processor. combine the vinegar, parsley, black garlic, thyme, shallot, agave, salt, black pepper, and red-pepper flakes and process for a few seconds, until the garlic is completely incorporated. 2. With the motor running, pour in the oil in a steady stream, making sure it directly hits the blade for quick emulsification. The vinaigrette will be brown in color and somewhat thick. 3. When ready to serve, warm the vinaigrette over low heat. Leftover vinaigrette can be kept covered in the refrigerator for up to five days.



• As you're about to learn on page 218, farmed chickens are kind of an ecological disaster. On the other hand, a \$6.99 grocery-store roast chicken—bonus points if the bird's not factory-farmed—is a healthier, helluva-lot-cheaper replacement for a week's worth of lazy, MSG-filled takeout.

You can stretch those seven bucks over two, three meals. Use the breast meat in a lunch salad. Those twine-bound drumsticks? They're the centerpiece of an Asian stir-fry. And tacos! Try this recipe from food stylist Susie Theodorou, who's worked on cookbooks for Jean-Georges Vongerichten and Gordon Ramsay and still sees the beauty in grocerystore chicken.—D.L.

Soft Chicken Tacos MAKES 3 TACOS

1 small red onion1 lime, halved

Salt

1 avocado 1 radish

1 ialapeño

1 roast chicken

l tsp. vegetable oil package Frontera Red Chile Enchilada

Sauce 3 corn tortillas

1 bunch arugula

DIRECTIONS

1. Thinly slice the onion into a bowl and sprinkle with half a lime's worth of juice and a pinch of salt. 2. Chop the avocado, radish, and jalapeño. 3. Pull the meat from a chicken thigh and a drumstick. 4. Heat the oil in a skillet on mediumhigh, add the meat, and heat for two to three minutes. Then add 1/2 cup of the sauce and heat, stirring, for two more minutes. **5.** Wipe out the skillet and heat the tortillas. 6. Assemble! Pile the tortillas with everything, including arugula, and squeeze on some lime and a little extra sauce.



THE FRY IS ALIVE! (JUST NOT THE POTATO KIND)

Good news: Frying isn't so evil if what's being fried is healthy and the oil is packed with good-for-ya monounsaturated fats, as in sunflower and rice-bran oils. That's why you get a free pass for a seafood fritto misto spread like the one on page 203, from N.Y.C. Mediterranean joint Santina (steal the recipe at GO.com), or these mayo-dipped chickpea fritters from chef Ari Taymor of Alma in L.A. that'll make you forget French fries exist.—D.L.

Chickpea Fritters

MAKES 30 FRITTERS

31/4 cups water Salt

11/3 cups chickpea flour 2½ tsp. corn flour

- garlic clove. microplaned Juice of 1 lemon
- bunch cilantro. finely chopped Olive oil
- egg yolks
- egg white Zest and juice of 2 Meyer lemons
- cups grapeseed oil Rice-bran oil

DIRECTIONS

1. Bring the water to a boil. Season with salt. Whisk in both flours (add slowly) and cook 20 minutes. 2. When the mixture resembles a paste, add the garlic, regularlemon juice, and

cilantro. Salt to taste and spread evenly on a 13 x 9-inch parchment-covered baking sheet rubbed with olive oil. Refrigerate 3. For the mayo: In a food processor with the motor running, add the eggs and lemon zest. Drizzle in the grapeseed oil until the mix gets really thick, then thin with Meyer-lemon juice. Set in fridge. 4. Once cool, cut the chickpea sheet into rectangles. 5. To fry, bring the rice-bran oil to 350 degrees. Drop in the chickpea rectangles a few at a time and fry until golden. Season with salt and serve with the mayo on the side.

Build a Smarter Sandwich in Two Steps

STEP 1

Don't Go Soft on Bread

 Great news: Bread isn't dead. Yes, most supermarket loaveseven the stuff labeled "whole wheat"—are just preservativepumped, nutrition-free white bread with a bad tan. But at new-wave bakeries like She Wolf in Brooklyn, throwback methods (natural sourdough starters, longer fermentation times) meet good-foryou ingredients (organic flours, sprouted-spelt grains) to make a loaf that actually brings flavor to the table. So hit up your local yeastmaster and get rustic. Maybe snag a quality bread knife, too-you'll be slicing your own.

STEP 2

Leave the Meat, Take the Broccoli

 Now comes the filling. Cold cuts are evil, but a slop pile of roasted vegetables is too close to obligatory Subwaystyle vegetarianism. Be brilliant and lazy at the same time by paring your sandwich down to a single star ingredient. Like...broccoli? No, not raw. C'mon-no one's that masochistic. Chef Amanda Cohen of veggie-centric gastromecca Dirt Candy in N.Y.C. deep-fries the florets, then utilizes the stems-both pickled and in a creamy slaw. (Find the recipe at GO.com.) You get plenty of dense, layered flavors, none of the pressed meat. — D.L.

NUTS SAFE FOR WORK

- Your job is stressful, boring, and on particularly bad days, both, which is why you find yourself staring at the office vending machine every afternoon at 4:17 p.m., choosing from options like Sweaty Trail Mix, Mom Cookies (only 37 calories!), and Sex-Toy-Sized Kit Kat. A better option: DIY your weekday-snack game with a weekend trek to Whole Foods for some all-natural, drawer-stashable bites. Remember: Stick to a snack-size handful. An open container very quickly becomes an empty one.-J.w.
- Beef jerky. Get the all-natural stuff, packed with lean protein.
- Dried fruits. So tasty, so sugary. So go easy.
- Dry-roasted nuts. Mmmbuttery, mineraldense cashews.
- Popcorn. And sprinkle with some addictive, cheesy, nutritional yeast.
- Candied ginger. Sugar-laden, but better than labgrown candy bars.
- Goji berries. Nutrient-rich, and taste like smoky dried cherries.
- Coconut. A pile of sweet, appetitequashing fiber.



HOW TO **START A** NEW JOB

BY JUSTISE WINSLOW



Thing is, you want to be comfortable. Be confident. Understand the dynamic in the room. Know that it's important for your presence to be felt, but not to be the center of attention. —AS TOLD TO CLAY SKIPPER

The tenth pick in the 2015 NBA draft recently began a job dunking for

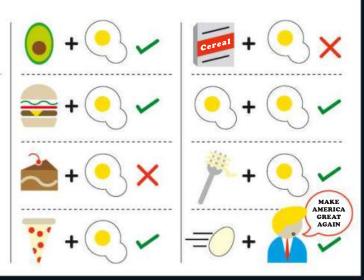
the Miami Heat.





Dear Egg, We Missed You

• Truth be told, we never stopped eating eggs, even when science swore that they were killing us. Now the lab coats have exonerated them and set us down a yolk-golden path of gastronomic joy. It turns out that chicken fruit doesn't necessarily crank our cholesterol levels—that it's actually stocked with good fats, filling proteins, and a GNC's worth of vitamins. To celebrate, we're putting an egg on damn near everything. Here, a simple visual guide to determine if what's in front of you can be improved with an over-medium egg topper.



Make It Grain!

• Pssst, there are good carbs. Really! (Thankfully!) They're grains, ancient ones-nutty and toothy, beloved by hippie co-op lifers and stat-crunching nutritionists. Rather than hype the health bona fides of these grains (high fiber, nutrient-heavy, and natural as hell), the smart man focuses on their chameleon ability to absorb flavors.—D.L.

Five Paths to Grain Nirvana

1. Ditch the emptycalorie arborio rice and make a risotto with farro, which adds a bit more bite.

- 2. Toast pearl barley in a skillet before boiling it in veggie stock, then top with a thick blanket of pan-roasted parsnips and butternut squash.
- 3. Use freekeh for a 'roided up tabbouleh. Mince every herb



you can find—parsley, mint, basil, oregano—with garlic. Throw in a few chopped seedless cucumbers and cherry tomatoes. Dress with olive oil and lemon juice. Crumble in some feta. Devour.

4. Find a soba-salad recipe, but sub buckwheat groats for noodles. Add any Asian-ish veggies (Napa cabbage, bok choy), thinly sliced. Toss in a dressing of soy sauce and ricewine vinegar with a splash of sesame oil.

5. Amaranth porridge! WAIT, COME BACK. The shiitake-and-thyme-laden bowl above (recipe's at GQ.com) from chef Joe Kindred of Kindred in Davidson, North Carolina, has the heft to fill a lumberjack.

FINALLY, LEARN TO EAT LIKE A LADY

• Ask any yogurt commercial—women know more about food than you do. And though the socio-cultural reasons why are b.s., our indoctrination is your salvation. Because the best way to learn about healthy eating is to consult literally any woman. Who'll say...

Of course that's bad for you.

We know butter is not a carb. We know what contains B₁₂. We know that three martini olives = a Swiss-cheese slice ÷ a baby carrot. Put aside your pride and just ask us if it's nutritious.

Pay down what you owe.

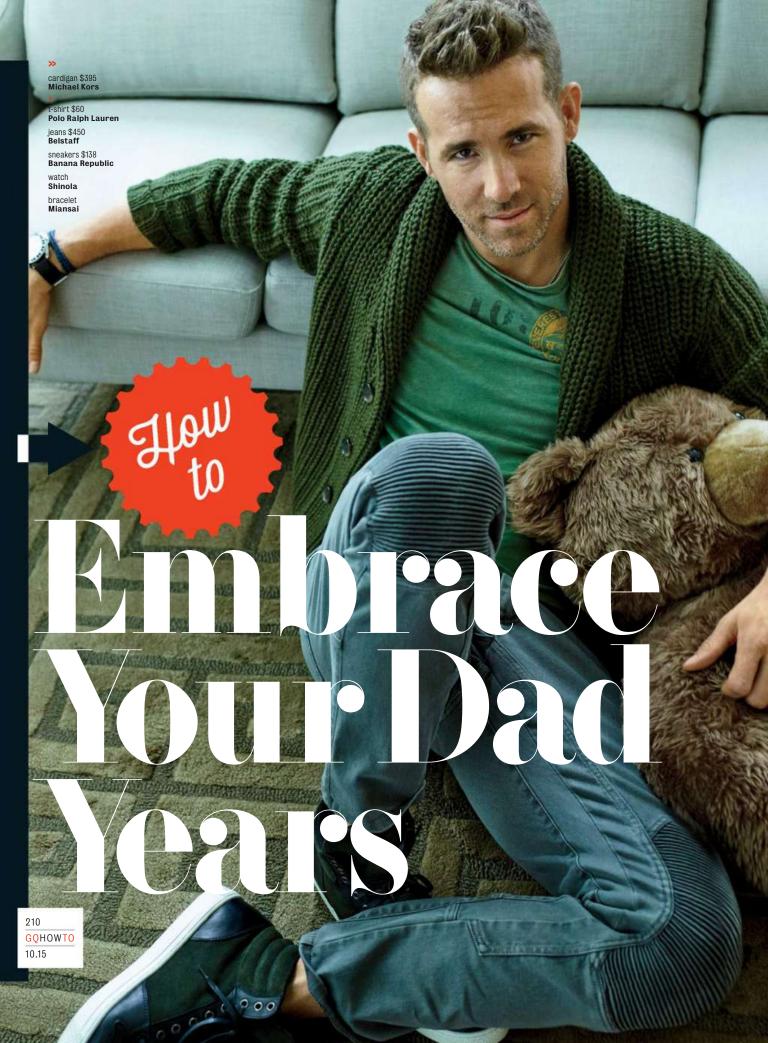
Eating is cumulative. And women implicitly know how to nullify a comfort-food bender with a next-day kale salad so that it never even happened. We can get you out of food debt.

Put takeout on a plate.

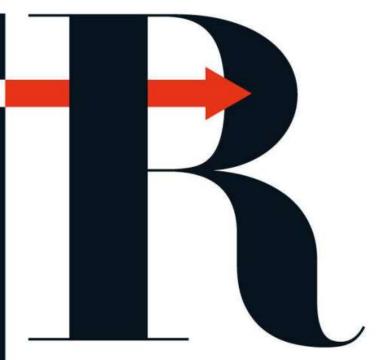
Lame? Yes. An inefficient use of china? Sure. But upending an oil drum of pad Thai onto a plate lets you see how many human-size servings are in the thing. (Answer: like, three.) Satiation science agrees: Eat from a plate, it feels like a meal; graze from a take-out container, it's a bottomless snack.

Eat one whatever at a time.

Ram 27 French fries into your mouth at once and you're done in five unsatisfying fistfuls, then stealing ours. Slow down and you'll scarf half as many—without having to burp to remember what you ate.—SARAH BALL







ABOUT THESE CLOTHES

How Sleepless Nights and Burp Stains Can Improve Your Look

■● Wear and Tear Flatters a Man

Cool-dad style means a three-day scruff. Beat-up boots. And a flannel shirt that, in a pinch, can double as a bib or a baby blanket.

You Traded In Your Big Wheel

Time to do the same with your clothes. Everything you buy should fit perfectly and be built to last, because you're not gonna do much shopping for, oh, 18 years.

>>

t-shirt \$45 **Polo Ralph Lauren**

shirt (at waist) \$145 cargo pants \$295 **Polo Ralph Lauren**

boots \$388
The Frye Company

watch

custom BMW R nineT Jane Motorcycles

ACCEPT THAT YOUR LIFE AS YOU KNEW IT IS OVER.

The first thing Ryan Reynolds would like you to know about having kids is: Don't listen to what Ryan Reynolds thinks about having kids. "Picture advice being loaded into Super Soakers," he says, grinning. He looks me up and down—I'm 33, about to be married, on the brink of it. "You're running around all dry and fancy-free—you're gonna be, like, drenched," he warns me.

Reynolds is 38 and on his eighth or ninth Hollywood lifetime. But right now his existence can be summed up

in far more elemental terms. There's the rustic house an hour north of New York City, where he and his wife, Blake Lively, have chosen to live and raise their daughter, James. And then there's the baby-monitor app on his iPhone, which buzzes every couple seconds as we sit upstairs in the renovated barn next to the main house. "This is your future right here," he says, showing me the cascade of alerts on his phone. James is 8 months old and about a hundred feet away, with her mother. And that's what's become of Ryan Reynolds.

"I've learned that an inordinate amount of clichés are completely true," he says. "Like, there is this kid here that I would walk through fire for. Or maybe not fire. Like, a very hot pavement, I'd walk through. A shag rug."

THINGS MIGHT GET WEIRD, BUT IT WON'T LAST.

This spring, Lively posted an Instagram photo of Reynolds carrying James in a baby carrier, and apparently James's feet were together when they should've been separated or something, who knows really, and the couple found themselves being harangued by millions of mommy bloggers. Matt Lauer even grilled Reynolds about it on *The Today Show*.

And it's funny, because you can tell you're answering through gritted teeth.

"Yeah, 'Can I just make some mistakes and all of you just fuck off?' Yeah. But you can't say that."

It was as if the existence of a child spawned by Ryan Reynolds and Blake Lively drove people around them crazy, like actually crazy, and there was a two-week stretch when Reynolds wondered if it would always be like this.

First he got hit by a car. It was April, a few months after his kid was born, and he was in Vancouver, shooting *Deadpool*. (He was fine.) But that wasn't the worst part. "A guy that I'd known for my whole life, one of my closest friends growing up, he had been shopping pictures of my baby around. I kind of got in front of it, which is good. But it was a slightly dark period. A bad couple of weeks."

This was somebody you knew well?

"Somebody I grew up with, yeah. Somebody I've known, who's been one of my closest friends, for 25 years."

Was that an experience you'd had before, being betrayed by someone like that?

"No. It was like a death. It was like one of those devastating things to find out."

Did he do it for money?

"Yeah, just for money. I mean, I don't think he thought he would ever be caught. But it's a pretty narrow group of people that I would send photos like that to."

Were you like, "Next time you need a check, just ask"?
"Well, I think he'd asked for a check enough times
where I was like, 'There's no more checks to be had.'"

Probably no more baby pictures, either.

"No. It was like so kind of shocking. There isn't really

a conversation to have. It's just, 'Oh, well, now I'm never going to see you or talk to you again, unfortunately.'"

The guy who drove into Reynolds was a paparazzo; Reynolds figures he was trying to get a photo of his daughter before the one his buddy was shopping came out. "The whole thing becomes so absurd that all you can do is laugh about it and just go, 'This isn't the real world. This isn't how real things work.' But it happens to be happening right now. And it will pass."

BY WILLIAM H. MACY

ноw то

BE HANDY

First: Put on your best jeans, a tight T-shirt, and a tool belt—a leather one. I don't know if the wife is telling the truth, but she says she gets hot when she sees me fix things. As for advice, it's best not to drink or smoke a doobie before playing with a table saw. Usually that should be the rule.

—AS TOLD TO CLAY SKIPPER

The actor has appeared on the cover of a special issue of 'Fine Woodworking' magazine.

YOU'LL BE HAPPIER ONCE YOU SURRENDER.

Ryan Reynolds's most recent film, just coming out now, is called *Mississippi Grind*. Him and Ben Mendelsohn, playing two broken, compulsive gamblers on the road, *California Split*—style, finding refuge in each other. Reynolds is charismatic in the film in the same caustic yet good-hearted way he was in *Adventureland* and *Van Wilder* and all the other cult hits that have maintained his reputation (text continued on page 251)









YOU WANT TO BE A DECENT PERSON. We know you do. But the world's confusing. Everything you do-buying chicken, driving a car, watching free porn videos on your laptop—seems to be morally perilous. You'd ask a rabbi if it's good or bad to use Uber, but you haven't been to temple (or church or the ashram) since you were bar mitzvahed! If only there were a few simple rules to follow, some smart people to guide you. Well, we have assembled just such a group of wise men and women. And here they answer our most burning questions to help us live better(ish).



CORNETT





IF A CHICKEN, A PIG, AND A COW WALK INTO A BAR, WHICH ONE SHOULD I EAT THE F# %K OUT OF?



• I'd always assumed that, going according to size, eating cows is worst (or for purposes of this magazine story, least good-ish), eating pigs is a bit less bad, and eating chickens is basically harmless. It turns out that I had it exactly backward. According to Aaron Gross, founder of Farm Forward and expert in all things meat-and-environmentrelated, it's difficult to be an environmentally responsible consumer of beef and pork. Still, if you eat 100 percent grass-fed, you at least reduce the huge fossil-fuel expenditure required to produce every

pound of beef raised in a

torturous feedlot. But with chicken, it's completely impossible. We messed with the genetics of chickens starting in the 1940s to make them bloated and meaty. Nearly all the chickens currently in existence-even ones cagefree and raised on an ashram by kittens-need antibiotics. And America's poultry industry is a breeding ground for antibiotic-resistant bacteria and avian flu, the latter of which wipes out wildbird populations. And if you care about animals, "the conditions that chickens and pigs are kept in on factory farms are far, far worse than those of cows," says William MacAskill, philosopher and author of Doing Good Better: How Effective Altruism Can Help You Make a Difference. —BEN DOLNICK

So what you're saying is, I can eat meat and still be a good person, right?

It depends on whether you care about causing other beings to feel pain and psychic misery. Bruce Friedrich, director of policy and advocacy at Farm Sanctuary,

says a good rule of thumb is whether you'd torture and kill your golden retriever. Because, he says, the animals we happily gnaw on are every bit as sophisticated and

pain-averse as the ones that cuddle up with us on the couch at night. The way he sees it, eating meat is for pleasure. Is that worth cruelty? His answer is no.—B.D.



Are some charities just better than others?



Yes. Elie Hassenfeld and Holden Karnofsky were two 25-yearold hedgefund analysts in 2007 when they created an organization called GiveWell. At the time, the

charity-rating racket used extremely crude, totally un-Silicon-Valley-worthy metrics: CEO pay, marketing budgets, stuff like that. But at GiveWell, they were nerds. they were quants, they were from the data generation, and they set their scalable. evidence-based minds to work.

They learned some things. First: They believe that the most effective giving focuses on the poorest people on earth. In fact, you can profoundly help so many more truly poor people in the world per dollar that GiveWell stopped even assessing charities that do work in America.

-CHRIS COHEN



Here are its top-rated charities

Against Malaria Foundation Malaria is a

data geek's perfect problem: widespread. devastating, cheap to prevent. With a \$4 bed net, the odds of getting the disease go down 50 percent. Against Malaria Foundation is the most effective.

GiveDirectly

Based on the idea that the best judges of the needs of poor people are poor people themselves, GiveDirectly distributes 87 percent of its budget via cellphone transfers to people in Kenya and Uganda. It's shown to have a dramatic impact on their quality of life.

Deworm the World Initiative and **Schistosomiasis** Control **Initiative**

GiveWell discovered that eradicating parasites in kids was even more beneficial to future income than giving kids books.



Should I give to panhandlers?

"No, not if it would displace a more effective donation. (But if it's that or a latte, feel free.)' -Peter Singer, ethicist and author of *The Most* Good You Can Do



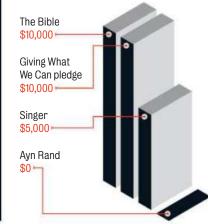


Ethical consumerism

is badly confused. Buying only Fair Trade coffee or avoiding clothes made in sweatshops—that achieves very little. Yes, conditions in sweatshops are horrific. But extreme poverty is so unimaginably extreme that sweatshop jobs are actually the good ones. The alternative is unemployment, prostitution, starvation. And Fair Trade licenses are difficult to get, so that most Fair Trade coffee comes from middle-income countries like Mexico. It's better to just buy from the poorest countries and donate what you Save.-WILLIAM MACASKILL. AS TOLD TO ANDREW GOLDMAN

How much of my salary do I have to donate?

• Here we chart how much of \$100,000 you should give away, according to the Bible, renowned Princeton philosopher Peter Singer, a British nonprofit that dictates we all give away 10 percent, and Ayn Rand.





MORALITY OFFSETS

- You're not always going to be good. We know. So just as you can assuage your guilt for worsening the fate of the planet when you fly to Tahiti with carbon offsets, here we help you feel better after committing common trespasses against morality.
- You bought and cooked a factoryfarmed-chicken breast for dinner.
 - Artemis! Otherwise just go vegetarian for a week.
- You eat at Chick-fil-A.
- Already solved: Go to Chickenoffset .com and match your fast-food bill in donations to LGBT charities.

Set your hipster

neighbor's backyard chickens free. Fly,

- You blamed a fart on the dog.
- Take responsibility for the poop on the rug.
- You "accidentally" hunt an African nation's most beloved lion.
 - Join the Peace Corps for two years, motherfucker.
- Seemingly invincible in your job at a white-shoe law firm, you are arrested for drunk driving.
- Thanks to a series of greedy and shortsighted decisions, you destroyed the economy.
- You don't correct your grandma when she says something racist.

- Coach a peewee hockey team. You will teach them about hockey, but they will teach you about life.
- No offset required. President Bernie Sanders will redistribute your wealth.
 - minutes late to her funeral.

Show up a few

219 | GQHOWTO | 10.15

HOW CAN I BE A GOOD JEW EVEN IF I'M NOT JEWISH?

• Rabbi Jonathan Blake of the Westchester Reform Temple in Scarsdale, New York, weighs in on our contemporary (and eternal) quandaries.

Does one have to believe in God?

I don't think you have to believe in God. You know, when I was a kid, I resisted the idea of God, and my dad always said: It's not really important whether or not you believe in God, but the way you live can demonstrate that God believes in you. I thought that was like a very elegant one-line sermon.

So what should you do to show that God believes in you?

One of the best things a person can do—
in the direction of selfimprovement—is to cultivate a discipline of gratitude. Not only should gratitude be a spontaneous reaction; it should also be a practicable discipline. And it's important to



making the world a better place, because being grateful creates mindfulness, which soothes the self but also leads you to the question: How can I give others the chance to experience this blessing, too? That's generosity. In traditional Judaism, the wisdom is that one should recite a hundred blessings a day. For most of us, it's more of a metaphor for how you can go about your life, incorporating thanks—not just as something you say. Even to step outside on a beautiful day and say, "I'm so grateful."

Can I text while I'm at a stoplight?

One of my favorite teachings is in the

twenty-fourth chapter of the Book of Exodus, where God says to Moses, "Come on up the mountain and be there." And that's the danger of the modern spiritual condition: that you might have attained the very summit of the mountain, but your head or your heart beats somewhere else. Distraction is a kind of spiritual injury. But God knows, it's a constant battle, and I'd be lying if I said I wasn't fighting it along with all of my congregants every single day.

Am I allowed to sub-tweet?

In this moment, you are my teacher—you have to explain what that is.

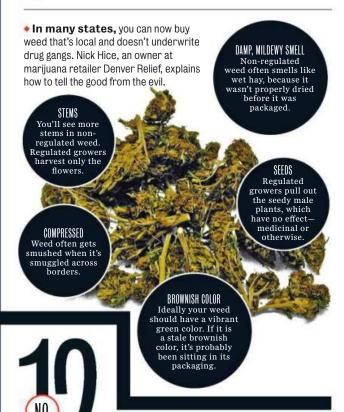
Oh, it's when you're talking about somebody on Twitter without using their handle. So the person doesn't see you talking about them.

You cannot subtweet.—TAFFY BRODESSER-AKNER

SHOULD I GIVE MY MONEY TO MY ALMA MATER?

• Yes, if you want to establish a permanent hereditary overclass. Consider Malcolm Gladwell's riposte to hedgefunder John Paulson's \$400 million donation to Harvard: He compared it to volunteering at the Hermès boutique.

Can I buy weed that doesn't fund cartels that behead children?





• We're agnostic

about whether or not you should be watching porn. But to determine whether there's a non-dirty (while still being, like, dirty) way to consume it, we assembled a team of adult-film-industry professionals to help us with some guidelines.

ERIKA LUST, EROTIC-FILM MAKER, SAYS: **1. Be a**

Can I watch

porn ethically?

responsible consumer.

VEX ASHLEY, PORNOGRAPHER/ PERFORMER, SAYS:

2. Pay for it.

STOYA, PORNOGRAPHER, SAYS:

3. If it's gotta be free, use torrents.

LUST SAYS: **4. Use more body parts.**

"Ask, 'Where does it come from? How was it made?' "

"Tube content is unethical, because it's mostly stolen."

"Torrent sites say, 'Information should be free!' Tube sites say, 'Well, they're just whores.'"

"Don't only choose with the cock.
Choose with the heart also."



Can I be rich and still be a good person?

 William MacAskill (see Nos. 1 and 6) argues that it's okay to be fully, unabashedly a onepercenter—as long as you're giving your money away.

I helped found a movement called Effective Altruism. And the ethos of that movement is that you should use your time and money as effectively as possible. Sounds simple, but people trying to be good often lack the information to know whether they're also being smart. When we rely on evidence and data to guide us-and not just rosy idealism—we end up reaching wiser, and sometimes surprising, conclusions about how to make a difference. Like when it comes to careers, for instance, you certainly don't have to work for a nonprofit in order to save the world, especially when you consider that a significant majority of social programs, when tested, turn out to have no impact. You might instead use the strategy I call "earning

to give," which is where you deliberately pursue a high-earning career, one that maybe doesn't in and of itself have a massive impact, but where you can do a lot of good by targeting a portion of your earnings to the most effective charities. For example, as a doctor you might assume you could do the most good by working in the poorest countries. Yes, you might be doing life-saving surgeries, but if you weren't doing them, someone else would be there doing them in your place. You could actually do far more good by staying in a rich country and targeting your donations to the most effective charities. Since cosmetic surgeons can earn double what, for instance, oncologists do, you'd likely do the absolute most good by getting into a high-earning field like plastic surgery and donating the difference between the salaries of those specialties. You could be saving literally hundreds, even thousands, of lives through your donations.—AS TOLD TO ANDREW GOLDMAN

14 WHAT ORGAN SHOULD I DONATE?

• If you're a dead donor, all of them. If you're a live donor, a kidney. Nearly 101,000 of the 123,000 people waiting for organs need a healthy waste-remover. You have two, so quit being greedy.



SHOULD I TELL Everyone how Generous I AM?

 Not according to this anonymous patron, who has committed to giving the ACLU \$250,000 a year for the rest of his life.

First of all, there's the selfish part. If you give to a notable organization, it becomes public. That's like an advertisement for other people to start soliciting you. Number two: It's also more efficient this way. Charities spend a lot of time and money organizing cocktail parties for the donors—how much money does that cost? The real reason to do it this way, though, is that if you really want to do something altruistic, taking away the glory purifies your motivations.

—AS TOLD TO MAGGIE LANGE

<u>NO.</u> 16

HOW CAN I BE GOOD IN BED?



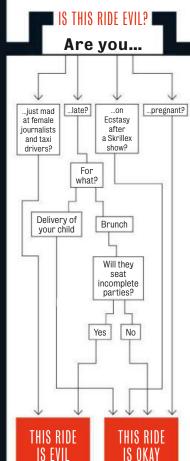
• Men get into problems postcoitally, when they say sweet things so we'll think

they're good dudes. Which makes you an asshole. Don't be the neighbor who says, "Hey, you can use my Jacuzzi anytime!" if you don't actually mean it. (By "use my Jacuzzi" we mean have an actual relationship.) Point is: Never lie about your Jacuzzi.

—JULIEANNE SMOLINSKI

NO. CAN I USE UBER AND STILL BE A GOOD PERSON?

• Well, Uber's the company that: sought to destroy its chief rival, Lyft, by faking customer requests for cars and then canceling them; contemplated punishing female journalists by leaking damaging information about them; surged prices as customers fled a 2014 hostage scene in Sydney. A key investor once said of the CEO, "It's hard to be a disrupter and not be an asshole." On the other hand, it's so useful! So, if you're wondering...

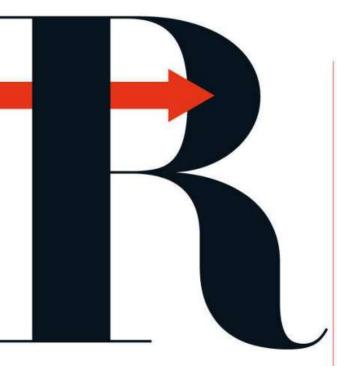


GQHOWTO | 10.15









Before you can reinvent (or re-reinvent) yourself, you have to get noticed in the first place.

"I look at acting as sort of a collaborative blood sport. I take pride in being generous and wanting everybody to look good. But my first movie, The Outsiders, starred 18 type A, testosterone-riddled, ambitious actors [Tom Cruise, Matt Dillon, Patrick Swayze, Emilio Estevez,

HOW TO

EAT WITHOUT

SHARING

BY JIM GAFFIGAN

Now, you can eat in the car

or the bathroom, which

I've done. But with kids, I like

to barter. Say, "If you don't

eat these fries, I'll give you

the candy I just bought." Of

course, there is no candy. But

that's okay, we lie to children

all the time—about Santa,

about how the future is going

to be all right. The last resort

also involves deception: You

tell them, "These are special

French fries made out of

kitten." That should stop them.

The author and comedian is

the father of five.

Ralph Macchio...]. In that situation, you'd better fucking figure out a way to hold your ground. I think that never really left me."

Don't stop. Ever. "I've been fortunate that I've always, always, always worked. Even after the sex tape was made public, it was like: You're still a professional baseball player, but you're playing for Double or Triple A. I lost the role in *Titanic* that Billy Zane got. But I was never banned from the game."

Remember who called when no one else did. "Only two people called [in the aftermath of the sex tape]: Jodie Foster and Don Simpson [the film producer]. Jodie and I had done The Hotel New Hampshire together, and she sent me a note with a recurring line from John Irving: 'Keep passing the open windows.' She was saying, 'You'll get through it.' Don basically said, 'Fuck 'em if they can't take a joke.' Oh, and Hugh Hefner took me aside at one point and said, 'You had to do it. The technology existed."

Do other things in bed, too. "If sleeping were an Olympic sport, I would be Michael Phelps. Really. You have no idea. It's kind of embarrassing."

Flip the script—then flip it again. "If you are in a transitional period, a rebuilding period, a fallow period, go to the opposite end of your range. For me, that was comedy. Lorne Michaels and Mike Myers put me in Wayne's World and Austin Powers. What keeps people from doing that? You get fearful. If a certain play is working, if you've been passing for 200 yards, you don't all of a sudden start running the ball. But there was a moment when I was playing Eddie Nero on Californication, the senator on Brothers and Sisters, Chris Traeger on Parks and Rec, and Drew Peterson [in a TV movie about the killer]-sometimes all in the same week. I thought: This isn't what I signed up for, but it's actually better than what I signed up for."

Know when to quit (because you're not wanted).

"When I left *The West Wing* [after contract talks broke down in the fourth season], I remember Martin Sheen taking me aside and saying, 'Boy, I sure hope you know where you're headed with this. I mean, man, you'd better have Steven Spielberg offering to put you in a movie.' I was like, 'Well, no, I don't.' But look, I love a negotiation where they make it really easy for you. I love it when it's like a 'take it or leave it' that's insulting. In the end, I could have lived with the fact that everyone on the show had gotten a raise but me-if I felt that we really knew what the story lines were going to be. One writer on the show told me he was in a meeting in which they told him to write whatever he wanted. He goes, 'I want to write a story about Sam Seaborn going back to Ohio to deal with his father,

> who has Alzheimer's.' The response: 'You can write for anybody but him."

you don't want to stay). "I left Brothers and Sisters when they ran out of storytelling runway. I mean, there are only so many family dinners you can do. I eventually had to go to them and say, 'Look, I don't do spatula work. I don't do scenes with oven mitts. If you're looking for that, you've got the wrong guy. I'm not doing scenes about casseroles."

part of Dr. Startz, the plastic surgeon thinking in my most sort of gimleteyed, hired-hand, gunslinger mindset: I don't want to get blown out of the water by Michael Douglas, who's going to be playing fucking Liberace, and Matt Damon, who's going to be wearing butt-tight velour. So with tightly pulled and shiny. I'm a huge seats for many years, and I'd always on the floor and not at the top. They had some money, but not a lot of money. They had hot girlfriends, but not that hot. I know that guy."

Know when to quit (because

Figure out how to compete with butt-tight velour. "When I got the in Behind the Candelabra, I was that in mind, I came up with this guy, Lakers fan, and I've had courtside notice these L.A. guys who were not

(text continued on page 251)

ABOUT THESE **CLOTHES**

10 New Suit Moves That Will Age You Backward

Diversify Your Colors

When you've been killing Hollywood red carpets (or just regular office carpets) for decades, you've worn your share of navy and gray. Time to try some new hues, like this mossy green flannel suit-and all the other colorful flannels Lowe wears in these pages.

Expand Your Shirt Collection

Your wardrobe changed between 21 and 31and it should evolve from 41 to 51, too. The new dress shirts have small collars, a slim fit through the torso, and rich notwhite colors.

Change Your Haircut

If you've had the same hairstyle since The West Wing was on, drive to the coolest barbershop in town. Show the man these photos. Leave with some matte pomade in hand.

suit \$1,045

shirt \$45 tie \$25

н&м

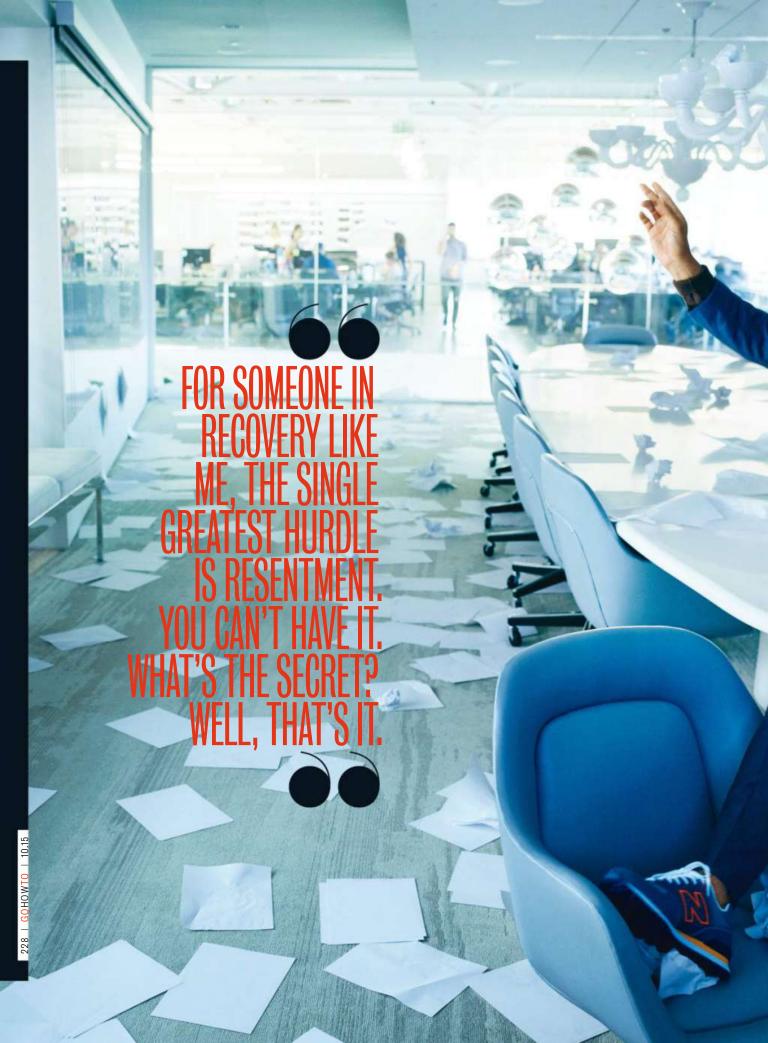
pocket square **Brunello Cucinelli**

> sunglasses Moscot

location 72andSunny courtesy of the Hercules Campus











Have 106 Babies (and Counting)

ED HOUBEN IS EUROPE'S MOST VIRILE MAN. AND AFTER YEARS OF DONATING SPERM THE "NORMAL" WAY (STERILE ROOM, CUP, CASH), HE AND SOME WOMEN LOOKING TO GET PREGNANT FOR FREE BEGAN CUTTING OUT THE MIDDLEMEN AND GETTING IT DONE AS NATURE PREFERS IT (SEX!). TODAY, HOUBEN HAS OVER A HUNDRED CHILDREN—AND ED THE BABYMAKER IS IN GREATER DEMAND THAN EVER. WE IMAGINE YOU HAVE SOME QUESTIONS









A little while back, a woman—an ovulating professor from Germany—arrived in Maastricht, the Netherlands, to a neighborhood just beyond the city center, on the other side of the Maas River. She parked her car at a distance from her destination so as not to be recognized (she knows quite a few professors in Maastricht), and was briskly moving down the sidewalk toward the apartment of Ed Houben, when she got caught behind a father walking his little boy at dusk. The father and son drifted past the square, but when they came upon Ed's apartment, the father pointed a finger in the dark, and the boy looked up to the third floor, where a star-shaped lantern was lit in a window.

"That is where the Babymaker lives," she heard the father say.

Later, when he heard the story from the ovulating professor, the Babymaker himself was delighted, for not everyone accepts what he does, and so he spends a lot of time explaining the wherefores and what-hows of his avocation, often with a startling dose of Dutch honesty.

But this boy and his father—what a small victory for Ed: a world in which the Babymaker lives just down the block and no one bats an eye or blushes, no one utters a condemning word, knowing he's there, ever ready.





THE FIRST TIME Ed Houben slept with another man's wife was in Amsterdam. It was 13 years ago, Ed was 32, feeling unattractive, convinced no woman would ever consider having sex with him again. He wasn't a virgin, but the *rapports sexuels* that had come his way were, frankly, as rare as dogs in space. In fact, it had been ten years since his last encounter, though he claimed not to miss it, the sex that is, busy as he was with his job, volunteering for the national guard, and war re-enactments that a man of his ilk and interests can get sucked into.

However, he'd made a huge decision. Convinced that having a family might not be in the cards for him, Ed Houben (pronounced who-been) decided to become a sperm donor. He would show up twice a month at the clinic, "producing" in "the production room"

to fill a cup for cash. The first time he went, they didn't even take his name. It couldn't have been more cold and impersonal.

"I was sort of expecting this gift of life to be received with sirens and fanfare," says Ed. "I remember saying 'Hello?' and somebody from another room answered 'Yes?' 'I have a cup here.' 'Oh, yes. Leave it on the table.'"

The more he donated, the more he desired some intimacy from the process. He began to advertise his willingness to do house calls on various websites. Produce a sample in the downstairs bathroom, deliver it upstairs—knock, knock—and retreat again, letting the clients take it from there. And on this occasion, here in Amsterdam, he anticipated it would be no different.

The woman had met him at the train station on her bike, and together they walked to her house, where they met her husband. She made some dinner, and they talked—wife, husband, Ed—until about 11 p.m. She smoked a joint and went upstairs, nervously. Ed had worked a full day in Maastricht and then took the train two and a half hours north. He'd now missed the last train back. It was possible, he thought, that he was too service-minded. The man kept chatting with him until, at midnight, Ed said, "Look, I really have to cut this short, because tomorrow I'm on the first train..." Blah, blah.

He knew how badly the couple wanted a baby, how badly he wanted to help. Sperm

donation, as crazy as it sounds, was what now gave meaning to his life. As for the couple, he understood that theirs was what they call in the Netherlands "a traffic-light relationship," one minute green and one minute red. The light was green now, but the man was sterile, having been snipped.

"I have to ask you a question," said Ed to the man, "because maybe you notice she's nervous all the time..."

"Yes, I've noticed," said the man, and then he explained. "She's an artist," he said, "and she feels very connected to nature. Basically she can't imagine a happy child will be created from a 12-cent syringe. She asked me to ask you—because she's too shy—if you would consider creating this child the natural way."

At this, Ed found himself flustered. "I really didn't know what to say. I felt caught in a situation which many men would find highly stimulating. Okay, here's a guy asking you to have sex with his wife without worrying about consequences, and my romantic reaction was, 'Did you have an STD test?'"

He was perched, of course, on the dividing line between two lives—between being an artificial inseminator of women and a natural one—and he thought it over for 15 minutes, which is a long time to leave a woman and her husband in limbo. He was thinking: Is there any ethical reason not to do this? Who do I hurt? After all, this was the way 7 billion people on earth have been created. At last Ed decided he would "go with the flow."

They climbed the stairs and entered the room, and the woman was very relieved when she saw him there. When Ed turned to say "I'll take it from here," her husband already had his pants off:

"We were three persons in the bed, and I was so surprised that I didn't know what to say. I had this combat inside—my head full of non-stimulating thoughts—but he never even accidentally touched me. He wanted to be present when his child was created."

After that, Ed had no problem if husbands wanted to be on hand while he slept with their wives. Not that he would limit himself to married heterosexual couples-there were hundreds of single, gay, and otherwise ambiguously attached women who required his services, too. But there was something edifying about this married couple in particular, something that made sense that hadn't before: In allowing him to have sex with their wives, the men, too, were on a journey, one as private as their wives'. And in this strange, dichotomous act of largesse and cuckolding, Ed himself might save them from self-recrimination and ego free fall. By sharing his seed with their wives just so, in the ovulation gozone, he might provide them with the greatest gift of all—a no-strings-attached baby—and in so doing complete their family with the final puzzle piece. What he least expected in return was gratitude, but that's just what he got.

ED HOUBEN IS NOW, at the age of 46, one of the preeminent makers of babies on the planet, father to 106 children of whom two-thirds were made the natural way (i.e., by sexual intercourse) and a third made via artificial insemination. In addition, there are 30 or so he estimates from his years at the clinic. Put another way: Ed Houben, who once had sex once every decade, has fathered roughly ten kids every year for the past 15 years. And he's still at it, thumping his way into history. So prodigious is his legacy that the BBC dubbed him "Europe's most virile man," while he regularly gets billed by media as "the Sperminator."

The prerequisite for his calling, he believes, is full transparency. So visit his website—with the tagline "It is nice you found my website!"—and you will discover that Ed has tested negative for gonorrhea and chlamydia. You can see that he's tested negative for syphilis and HIV, too. You can gaze upon pictures of him, one in which he kneels beside one of his small children, from some years ago when he was a bit more youthful.

Nevertheless, he's quick to describe himself as a "truly ugly fat guy with glasses." An endomorphic bachelor with a somewhat block-shaped head and lower grill of uneven teeth, he lives in a five-room apartment, gradschool humble but relatively roomy by Dutch standards, from which his mother comes and goes, often cooking and cleaning for him. He doesn't own a car; rather, he bikes everywhere, no matter what the weather.

In short, Ed Houben might be the world's least likely natural inseminator (known in the donor world as an N.I., as opposed to an A.I., or artificial inseminator)—and maybe the best, if there is such a thing. Regardless, he's a very normal-seeming person living a spectacularly abnormal life. He drinks coffee and goes to work (work he won't specify for his employer's sake, but it involves sharing his love for Maastricht and its history at an annual salary of 18,000 euros). He strolls the Old City, greeting those he knows with a cheery smile and slightly stiff formality.

But then, his outside-of-work schedule is constructed around an ever shifting lineup of assignations, all determined by the ovulation cycles of his clients, the women who come to him from the countries of Europe, from Brazil and Australia, Hong Kong and Japan. And sometimes, in turn, they fly him all over the world in order to mate with him. In one record week, he had six partners and 14 ejaculations (releasing around 4 billion sperm), not that he was counting. (*Was* he?) He's also slept with three women in a day, and during one particular fecund streak successfully impregnated eight women in a row.

In a *Der Spiegel* article published a few years ago, one of Ed's would-be mothers, one to whom Ed reached out on a fertility site, says, "Ed is so unproblematic. You don't even





notice him." Another with whom I spoke says, "It's very nice, what he does. But on the other side, I'm sure it's not that he has to force himself. He's a man.... Maybe 50 percent really wants to help with starting a family, and the other 50 percent likes having sex with women he finds attractive. I don't really see a problem in that. No one is allowed to have fun having sex? He's not forcing anyone."

Ed claims that over time he's been able to shed his self-consciousness in the boudoir as he's come to inhabit his role as spermprovider/paramour with confidence, stressing the fact that, according to his own Internet research, odds of conception are higher by the natural method, and higher, too, if a woman has an orgasm. (Experts disagree on whether either is actually true.) Though it's been a while since Ed had his sperm tested, previous tests suggested that his swimmers are more potent than average, and he guesses that today his sperm at 46 is probably "similar to someone else's in their twenties."

As well, Ed claims to be an egalitarian in the bedroom. He emphasizes that for a decade he accepted women regardless of their attractiveness. (In the past three years, however, he's revised his policy, asking for pictures. "All women are perfect," he says, "but physically some are more perfect than others.") He says his impetus was simple: that a normal schlub like him could make a difference in a woman's-or a couple'sworld full of emptiness. And for those who find themselves at the end of the line-with little dignity and money left-he offers his services for free, as he feels that life shouldn't have to be bought. "I'm rich in children," he says, "but not in money."

When you first meet Ed, he seems very adept at this particular sort of branding—the self-effacing self-aggrandizement. He's helping, not taking advantage. He's giving

(at no cost, after all), not having sex with strangers. He's quick to tell a story about informing his friends for the first time, fearing that they would regard him as debauched, and to his relief being called "noble." And it's disorienting, for Ed lives in what might truly be considered a morally ambiguous space that he argues isn't ambiguous at all. "I really believe children should be conceived from an act of kindness and that they deserve to know their father as more than a number," he says. "I forbid myself to feel proud of what I do. I don't have any children; other people have children because of a small contribution from me."

To that end, his pact with couples and would-be single mothers goes like this: I'm here if you want your children to know their biological father, or if later they want to find me themselves. I will not stalk you or try to repossess said children. I trust you and accept the tacit agreement we've made, without a signed contract or threat of child

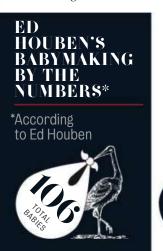
reasons, hours of communication with no result had left him feeling frustrated and a little grumpy.

Even though his life might seem like a "gangster's paradise," he said, when plans fall apart "I can feel quite sad or even angry for a few minutes. In [both] my job and in donating, I'm totally dependent on what other people want me to do."

But now the spinning world seemed somewhat put back on its axis. Ed was lounging, hair disheveled, belly protruding from the bottom of his shirt, in a satisfied post-coital haze on the couch. I was looking at a man from both sides: one who was both "helping" people *and* actualizing himself in the most Darwinian sense. A halfhearted plate of grapes and some crackers sat on the coffee table, not on offer for me but for the woman who had just left. Exactly three grapes had been plucked from their stems.

"I've helped rich people, poor people, people who in their country are famous," he bedspread. Nightstands, one on either side, hold books touting baby first names and single-mom survival kits, motherhood and pregnancy tips. There's a framed mantra on either stand, one in blue and one in pink, that reads *Keep Calm and Have a Baby*. On the bottom shelves, there are pads and new panties, offerings of bottled water and juice. Sometimes one woman might leave a little gift for the next woman—lotion, an unopened pregnancy test. Among the tchotchkes adorning the room is a statuette of a pregnant woman with a child touching her belly.

When Ed has a visitor, he's also happy for her to spend the night, whatever's easiest. And depending on the schedule, he's happy to try multiple times. Everything gets a little trickier, though, when people travel to the Netherlands from as far away as Asia and sometimes stay up to ten days. Ed is always very clear with the would-be mothers that he has a schedule to keep, synced to the ovulation cycles of all the others. (He can have a





support, that in procreating I have ceded all parenting to you while maintaining a distant interest only activated by your, or the child's, approach. (To date, his leap of faith has paid off: No one has sued Ed for child support.)

Depending on your vantage point, his credo might seem revolutionary or manipulative, unpalatable or generous. So is Ed Houben a self-styled savior or sex machine—or is it possible in this blurry age of inbetweenity to be both at once?



ONE THURSDAY EVENING in March, I went to Ed's apartment just after he'd had an assignation with another woman, an ovulating surgeon who had driven two hours for a one-hour session. In previous days, a couple of women had canceled their appointments due to illness and scheduling conflicts, which as it unfolded in a flurry of texts left Ed wondering if theirs had been more an issue of cold feet. Whatever the

said. "They all come because they've reached a point of desperation with our medical system, and I offer myself as a better option than a one-night stand."

The way these home visits typically work depends upon whether one is a new visitor or a repeat. In the case of a repeat, as the surgeon was, both parties can dispense with the formalities and, after some freshening up and a quick chat, pretty much get right to business. Often the women are driving some distance to be here with plans to turn around and return home that same evening. But in the case of new would-be mothers, Ed will sit for as long as necessary to achieve some level of connection and comfort, then eventually, if they are in agreement, move the action to the guest room.

"This is where the magic happens, the creation of life," said Ed, showing me into a cramped warren, without a hint of irony.

The guest room features the enticements of coupling: a double bed draped with a pink

dozen women in rotation at any given time.) If he has free time during their stay—which is rare—he's happy to act as a tour guide in Maastricht or to accommodate his visitor with advice. He turns over the guest room to them, gives them an extra set of keys to the apartment, explains the bus system.

If it seems a libertine life, Ed is also running his own sort of free, existential Airbnb, meeting new people constantly, taking on their woes and elations. Problems can arise when someone desires time outside the bedroom with him-or even declares her love for him. (Six total, to date, according to Ed...but who's counting?) And this is where it can get very tricky; lines blur, and even Ed finds himself confused. In the 13 years of doing this work, he claims to have had three girlfriends, all of whom were clients but ironically none of whom had babies by him. At the moment, a Vietnamese woman wants non-business time with him, but her visit will overlap with a couple

arriving from Taiwan, which causes no small amount of consternation.

In the messy office at the other end of the apartment from the guest room, Ed showed me pictures of some of the women, and their children, at least half of whom he's met: "Jacob" from Jerusalem, "Eve" from Berlin. Some are of mixed race, some of various religions: a Muslim daughter, a son who is Orthodox Jewish. Sometimes he forgets their names. As he flicked through the images, he said, "This one looks like her mother.... This one looks like her father." He pondered. "It seems like half my kids have blond hair and blue eyes," he said, baffled. "From what I learned about genetics in high school, sometimes I wonder, how come?"

On this evening, Ed had a Skype call scheduled with a prospective would-be mother. She was from Belgium, blonde and pretty, with a sad sweetness in her voice. She already had one child, and her husband, the love of her life, had died suddenly in an accident. She desperately wanted one more child to complete her family, which is what had led her to Ed. They spoke a while, in German. Was he attracted to her? I asked.

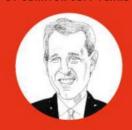
"No, not yet," he said. "If I had to choose a model for the cover of my magazine, I would not put her in first place. But I also find kindness attractive, so I'm giving her the benefit of the doubt. When we meet, there will be personal sympathy."



AS IT TURNS OUT, there's no blueprint for a career in hands-on procreation, no job counselor urging the latest crop of college graduates into a life of fornication. If there were, we might all just retreat to the canopy and call ourselves bonobos. And yet there is a historical precedent.

In a 2013 TEDx talk given by Ed, he namechecks two of his biggest heroes: Helena Rosa Wright, a 20th-century English pioneer of women's rights, and a mystery man named "Derek" who was called into "secret service" by her. Here's how it worked: During World War I, over a million British men died in battle (in addition to millions of returning soldiers/husbands who suffered either debilitating war wounds or PTSD), leaving a generation of women without a way to have babies. Enter Derek-a cosmopolitan Brit who had once worked on a rubber plantation in British Malaya. He was, by all accounts, charming, good-looking, a lover of ladies. As Wright witnessed firsthand the deep social cost of these frayed, childless marriages, and as science offered no practical solution (the first "test tube" child would be born six decades later, in July 1978), she lit upon an idea, one practiced in other cultures. For those couples desperate for children, a quiet deal could be made. A telegram would be sent relaying likely ovulation dates, SURVIVE ON AN ISLAND

BY SENATOR JEFF FLAKE



First, you gotta find a water source—you can only stand so much coconut water.

Now, for fire, there's always an area on an island where old water bottles wash up, and you can use these as a magnifying glass. The real chore is mental. Being completely alone, it can be spooky. One time, I spent the most entertaining hour of my life watching two hermit crabs fight over a shell. I took it as a sign I'd been on the island too long.

—AS TOLD TO CLAY SKIPPER

The Republican U.S. senator from Arizona is a survival hobbyist who enjoys stranding himself on empty islands for a week at a time.

and Derek would rush to the scene, impregnate the wife, and vanish again. In this way he surreptitiously helped create 496 children.

Whoever this dashing Derek was and whatever his apparent charms, his were much simpler days. Today, nightmare stories abound: the donor who knew he was sterile, "selflessly" offering himself for sex; the prolific contributor who was autistic; a white supremacist who donated in Scandinavia, figuring his clientele would be white. In the case of "Donor 7042," a Danish man with a severe genetic disorder helped create 99 children (34 of them in America, as it turns out) with what the papers came to call his "Viking sperm." At least ten of the children have the disorder, which can cause cancer and shorten one's life, in some cases, by 15 years.

And yet by his willingness to be open, and by offering his services for free, Ed also seems to occupy a place apart from his cohort. During our four days together, I confess that Ed's honesty caused an intense sort of whiplash. On the one hand, I was intrigued by the logistical reality of his life, and of course I was moved by the plight of the women coming to visit. On the other hand, I found myself cynical, critical, disbelieving. (Would someone say I was merely jealous?) Sometimes I experienced these jumbled feelings within the span of a minute, as he spoke so matter-of-factly. But he answered each and every question with graphic willingness

and vivid detail, political correctness (and my opinion of him) be damned.

He described the women who came to him, as if reading chapters of an illicit novel aloud. Which seemed both a bit skeevy and a violation of their privacy. (And yet I kept asking questions.) He'd slept with concert pianists and ex-lingerie models. He'd slept with 13 doctors. There was a handicapped would-be mother whom Ed had to carry two stories up to his apartment. Another disabled woman couldn't control her facial expressions, he said, but when she took off her clothes, she had the most beautiful body he'd seen. There was the woman from a former Communist country who. unlike so many others, knew exactly how to give and derive pleasure. ("I saw a documentary about how people from former Communist countries are better lovers, because without money, that was one of their only forms of self-expression.") As well, there was a lesbian who told him that if she was going to be with a man only once, then she wanted "to do it all."

Next came stories of the husbands: There was one from Istanbul who wrote up pages of detailed instructions for how to stimulate his wife in bed (sent via e-mail)—and after traveling all the way to Ed's front door, he sat outside in a rental car as Ed had sex with his wife, never to meet. There were husbands with testicular cancer, and one from Belarus who lived too close to Chernobyl. Like other men of his generation, the Belarusian ended up realizing he was sterile after a seemingly impossible 15 years of trying. The couple would drive over a thousand miles to get to Maastricht and stay three days. When Ed conjugated with his wife, the husband sat in the living room, watching TV. It was peculiar, but of course Ed understood his pain, too, and his willingness to try anything for a baby. "I think the starting point has to be 'Can you imagine how it feels after 15 years' disappointment?" says Ed. "You don't start from 'Okay, I heard today I'm sterile, now I'm going to have [this guy] bang my wife."

Yet another man arrived, scaring Ed by the sheer size of his person. He was a special-forces officer, ripped and trained and intimidating. When his wife said she thought she was still a virgin, Ed was incredulous, until her husband removed his pants to reveal his appendage. "Caution," said Ed. "Some men are not well-endowed. It was really, in erect form, a pinkie finger." The husband said that his wife deserved the chance to have a baby and that, as well, it would be "a gift" to let her have sex with "a normal man." Still, he stayed in the room to participate. "We kept to our zones," said Ed.

All of this honesty was, at times, too much. But the Houben Doctrine, preached often to the media, is dispassionate and simple: The system *(continued on page 252)*

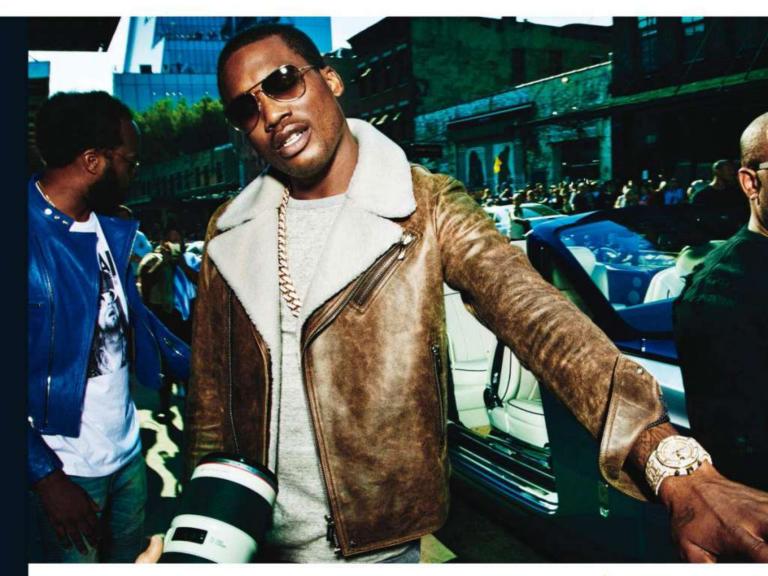




Survive the Haters

HE HAD THE NUMBER ONE ALBUM IN THE COUNTRY, AN ARMY OF LOYAL FANS, AND THE WORLD'S MOST VOLUPTUOUS POP DIVA ON HIS ARM. THEN DRAKE TURNED HIM INTO A LIVING MEME AND THE TABLOIDS SAID HE'D BEEN DUMPED. YET MEEK MILL AND NICKI MINAJ CANOODLED ON. HERE, MEEK WEARS THE COLLECTIONS OF FIVE LEGENDARY FRENCH FASHION HOUSES: THE KIND OF CLOTHES YOU NEED TO SQUIRE A GIRL LIKE NICKI





Thick

HERE'S A TEN-SECOND RECAP of the Drake vs. Meek Mill rap beef: Meek claims Drake doesn't write his own raps; Drake writes raps-plural-that embarrass Meek Mill; the Internet follows with a trillion terabytes of memes to lock in some institutional memory of the lyrical ass-whooping. The photos you're looking at now happened to be shot the day Drake released the first diss record, "Charged Up." On set at the shoot, Meek's camp huddled around an iPhone to hear the song. Between photos, Meek tweeted: "Baby lotion soft." The world disagreed.

In retrospect, it doesn't really matter that Meek lost a rap battle. Because he still has the girl. Meek and Nicki Minaj are the power couple hip-hop's always wanted. Though they've been compared to Jay Z and Beyoncé, Hov and Bey are practically U.N. ambassadors at this point. Whereas every day with these two is the post-Met Ball elevator ride with Solange-fiery, spontaneous, unpredictable, publicist-heart-attack-inducing.

Nicki is used to making mega-fame look easy. "We're like any other couple in the hood," she says. Meek, not so much. When I ask when they started courting, he replies, "About a year ago. Maybe a year and change." Nicki pauses and play-slaps him. Meek is oblivious to the fact that he has just confirmed the rumors that he and Nicki were "courting" while she was still with her ex-boyfriend. That doesn't stop them from shooting each other looks that would lead to instant sexing if I weren't there. "My favorite thing about Meek is kissing him," Nicki says. "I love the way his lips feel."

I ask this new Bonnie and Clyde for the social-media era about their infamous double Twitter stickup, just four days old when we speak: Meek's jab at Drake, and Nicki's shots at the MTV VMAs for not nominating her ubiquitous "Anaconda" for Video of the Year-and the subsequent dustup with Taylor Swift. "Taylor called and we're good now," Nicki says. "She didn't see the bigger picture." Nicki says she has zero regrets. "I'm very happy I tweeted what I tweeted. When these pop girls have a moment like 'Anaconda,' they win everything." I ask Meek the same question about the initial Drake tweet. Any regrets? "You know Meek Mill don't regret nothing," he says. It's the kind of stance you can take when Nicki Minaj likes the way your lips feel.—MARK ANTHONY GREEN

DIOR

Founded: 1946 Designer: Kris Van Assche

The Dior look is so minimal it's almost punk. Lesser designers would make a shearling coat as an oversize ranch robe; Van Assche ingeniously shrinks his into a razorsharp moto jacket.



jacket \$8,100 **Dior Homme**

t-shirt \$290 Dior Homme

sunglasses Salt Optics

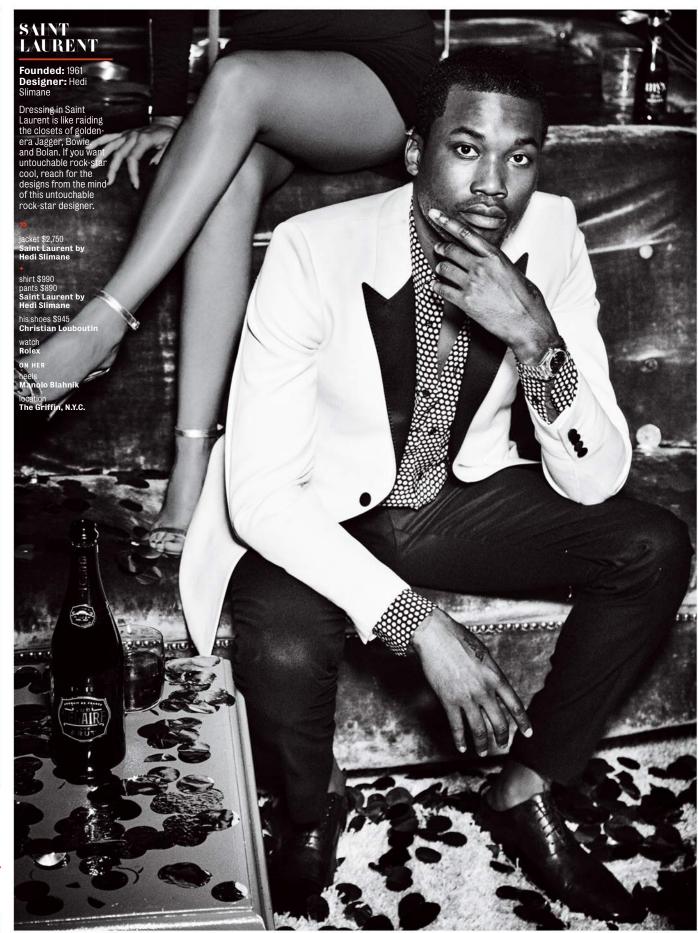
custom watch Audemars Piguet at Shyne Jewelers

jacket (in background, left) Maison Margiela

black sweatshirt (right) Givenchy by Riccardo Tisci

2015 Rolls-Royce Phantom Drophead Coupé



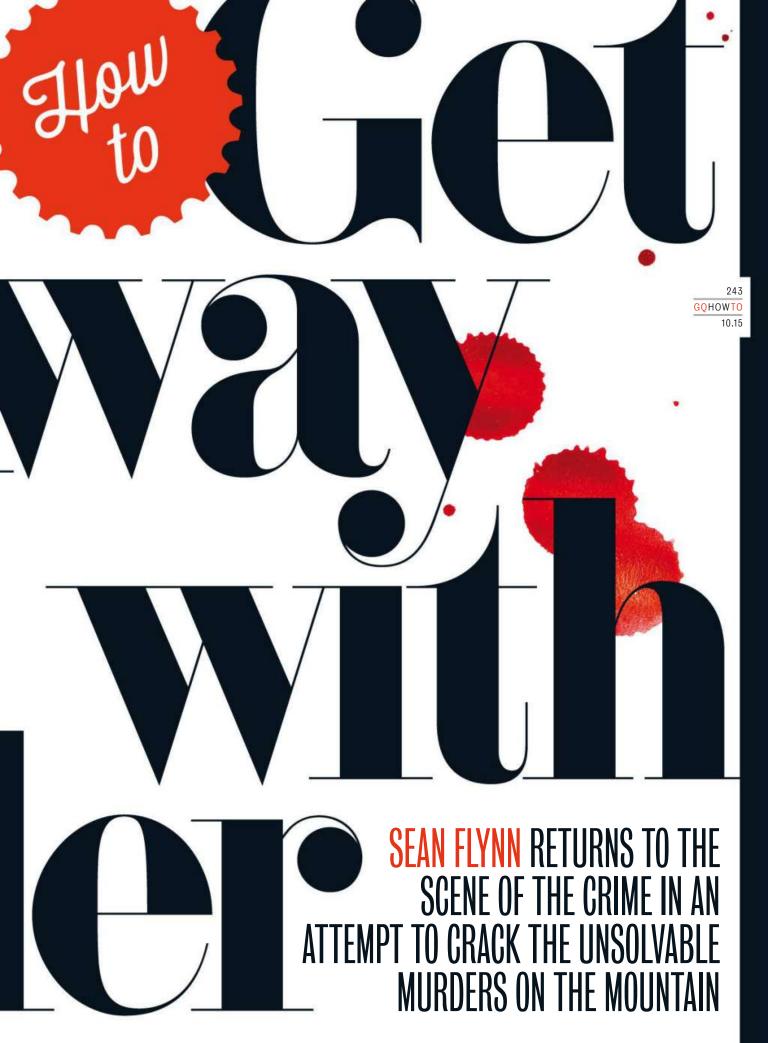






FOUR DEAD, AN EVER-EXPANDING
LIST OF SUSPECTS, DOZENS
OF DETECTIVES ON THE CASE.
THREE YEARS AFTER THE FACT,
A MYSTERIOUS SHOOTING IN
THE FRENCH ALPS HAS EVOLVED
INTO ONE OF THE MOST
CONFOUNDING, GLOBE-SPANNING
CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS
IN DECADES.







MURDER IN THE ALPS

The driver was a British engineer born in Iraq who worked on satellite systems in Surrey, and maybe that's why he was dead and all the others were, too. On a Wednesday afternoon in September 2012, Saad al-Hilli drove his maroon BMW from a campground on the shore of Lake Annecy, in the French Alps, and into a tiny community called Chevaline, at the far edge of which the pavement slips into the trees. The path rising out of Chevaline is steep and pocked and hyphenated by tight bridges crossing a noisy froth of water. For three kilometers, there is nowhere to turn around and nowhere to go but up, and then there is nowhere to go at all. The public road ends at a small parking area, where Saad nosed his BMW to the tree line.

September 5 was a spectacular day, sunlight drizzling through foliage that twitched with the breeze. Saad, who was 50, stood with his elder daughter, 7-year-old Zainab, maybe talking to a local cyclist who'd pedaled up the mountain or maybe just absorbed in the scenery. It is impossible to say for sure.

Almost certainly, though, he didn't see the shooter in the trees before he heard the first shots.

Saad screamed at Zainab to get in the car. He quickstepped to the driver's door, twisted into the seat. But Zainab hadn't moved, just stood there, frozen. Saad probably didn't realize that. What man leaves his daughter to get shot? He slapped the gearshift into reverse, cranked the wheel hard to the left, stomped on the gas. The BMW skittered backward in an arc, a jittery half circle. The shooter was out of the woods by then, standing in the center of the arc like a pivot point. The car completed the turn, the rear against the tree line, got stuck, wheels trenching divots into the loose soil at the edge of the forest.

Saad had clipped the French cyclist with the bumper, dragged him through the turn, left him bleeding in the dirt.

Most likely Saad already was dead. He was shot four times, twice in the head. His wife, a 47-year-old dentist named Iqbal, was dead in the backseat, also shot four times, also twice in the head. Her mother, Suhaila al-Allaf, was dead, too, shot three times, twice in the head. The cyclist was shot five times, including twice in the head. Zainab was still alive, though barely: She was shot once in the shoulder, then clubbed in the skull with the butt of the gun.

The shooter had fired 21 times, mostly at a moving vehicle. Seventeen bullets hit people. None of them struck the frame or the doors or the fenders or any other part of the BMW. Eight of them were head shots.

Apparently he was a professional.

THE EMTS ARRIVED minutes after Zainab was found collapsed in the road by a British cyclist who happened upon the scene. The gendarmes, who are part of the French military and responsible for policing the rural districts, swarmed the mountain close behind them.

Uniformed officers closed off the road, the Route de la Combe d'Ire, and forensic technicians gathered shell casings and marked where they fell and photographed the blood and studied Saad's BMW without disturbing any of the bodies. They did this with such delicacy that they did not notice for almost eight hours that Saad's younger daughter, 4-year-old Zeena, was alive and physically unharmed, hiding beneath the folds of her dead mother's skirt.

Investigators are not supposed to embrace reflexive theories in the moments

immediately following a crime, and the prosecutor in Annecy insists they did not. "The only thing that came to mind," Eric Maillaud says of all the blood and bodies. "is that we have someone who has no respect for human life." He says this slowly, deliberately. Maillaud, who is 53 years old, has been a prosecutor for 11 years, five of them in Annecy, which is a small, serene city unaccustomed to spectacular spasms of violence. Only one or two people are murdered in a typical year, and those are routine as killings go: domestics or robberies or escalated arguments, single flashes of rage. But this on the mountain? "There are very few people who are capable of killing so many people," Maillaud says. "And to try to kill children?" He shakes his head slowly. "So we know we are dealing with savages. That is the only thing that comes to mind."

Savages was perhaps the first thing to come to mind, but other thoughts-obvious and understandable thoughts-surely followed in quick succession. Detectives, no matter how well trained and dispassionate, are plagued by the same instincts and bias toward common sense as any layman. There were four dead people in the forest, a crime heretofore unimaginable in Annecy. One of those people was a local man known to be an ardent cyclist. The other three were strangers, foreigners, the patriarch of whom was an Arab engineer with technical data and complicated schematics—the matériel of spies and terrorists—on laptops and thumb drives in his camper by the lake.

They'd all gotten two in the head, the way special ops and assassins are trained to do it.

It all seemed so obvious three years ago, exactly what happened. Saad al-Hilli got whacked. He was stupid enough to have his family with him, so they got killed, too. The Frenchman? Poor bastard just had the miserable luck of being in the wrong place at the worst time.

What other explanation could there be?

ZAID AL-HILLI found out his brother was dead the day after the murders, on September 6. He learned this from a friend whose wife had seen it on television, a quadruple murder in the French Alps being the kind of story that gets a significant amount of attention in the European press.

He went to his local police station, in Esher, England, that afternoon to ask for details, but neither the officers there nor a detective in major crimes knew any more than he did.

The next day, the police came to his flat to officially tell him his brother was dead. There was a swarm of reporters on the sidewalk out front, so the officers kindly escorted him out and put him up in a barracks—"like a little hotel room, really," Zaid says—first in Surrey,



then in Sussex. The English detectives asked Zaid to account for his whereabouts between August 25 and September 5, and they asked for his mobile phone and his laptop. After two weeks as a guest of the local constabulary, after the press had finally dispersed, Zaid went home.

English investigators had been assisting their French counterparts from the beginning, which is a matter of routine in international homicides. To figure out why someone was murdered, it is useful to understand who that person was—to know his routines and habits, his skeletons and foibles. So the French came across the channel, Maillaud among them, to ask questions and pull records and request searches. They were convinced, just days after the killings, that someone wanted Saad al-Hilli dead. "Without a doubt," Maillaud told reporters near London on September 13, "the reasons and the causes have their origins in this country."

Zaid had no idea what those reasons and causes might be. Nor did he know his brother had been in France. He knew he liked to travel, towing a Bürstner camper behind his BMW, and he knew Saad owned a brokendown ruin of a house in Burgundy he thought he might rebuild someday. But Zaid had never known him to go to Annecy, except for that one time when they were children on holiday in Geneva. Zaid remembered being on a boat beneath a smudgy gray sky, but little else. And it was slightly peculiar, he thought, Saad going camping with the girls so late in the summer, when the school year was beginning.

Truth is, Zaid didn't know much of anything Saad did anymore. The brothers hadn't spoken in almost a year, since October 2011, except through solicitors sorting out their late father's estate. There were more than a million dollars in a Swiss account and a house south of London in Claygate and a small studio in Spain and considerable disagreement about who should get what. It was contentious and sad, but Zaid believed they were civil about it, he and his brother. "There was no feud," he says. "We weren't riding around on horses shooting at each other." They let their lawyers write letters and file briefs instead.

He knew that Saad worked on satellite systems. But he found the theory that intrigued the French and delighted the tabloids—that Saad was killed, and got everyone else killed, because he was selling secrets—preposterous. Zaid was certain his brother was not a spy, industrial or otherwise. Saad was a freelance mechanical engineer. He wasn't involved in classified optics or encrypted communications technology; he had no secrets, nor access to them. And anyway, he would have made a lousy spy. "Saad is outspoken," he says, "and outspoken people aren't capable of anything like that."

Eric Maillaud was wrong, then. Zaid believed that, too. The reasons and causes of four murders in the Alps did not have their origins in England. Why would they? Even if someone had wanted Saad dead, it would have been much simpler to kill him at home. Why go all the way to France and slaughter his family, too? To Zaid, this was plainly

THE CRIME SCENE

The Who, What, and Where of L'Affaire de Chevaline





SHOOTER

When a British cyclist happened upon the grisly site of a fresh quadruple homicide, he notified first responders, who began sorting through a confounding scene. In the car were three murder victims: Saad al-Hilli, a British-Iraqi engineer (1); Iqbal al-Hilli, his wife (2); and Suhaila al-Allaf, Iqbal's mother (3). Outside the car, Saad and Iqbal's elder daughter, 7-year-old Zainab (5), had been knocked unconscious. Eight hours later, investigators discovered the al-Hillis younger daughter, 4-year-old Zeena (6), hiding in her dead mother's skirt. The fourth murder victim was a local cyclist named Sylvain Mollier (4). The shooter (7)-who investigators deduced had been hiding in the woods before emerging and firing 21 shots-was long gone.

logical: Saad and his family were in the wrong place at the wrong time, casualties of a local killing, not the other way around. Surely the authorities would quickly figure that out.

Twenty-three days after the murders, on Friday, September 28, the police knocked on Zaid's door again. They had a warrant to search his flat.

CHAPTER 2

THE IRAQI CONNECTION

Saad al-Hilli's house, the Tudor in Claygate, had been searched on September 9. Television-satellite trucks lined the street and reporters watched from behind blue-and-white police tape until they were pushed back 200 yards and all the houses nearby were evacuated and the Royal Logistics Corps' bomb-disposal unit was summoned. There was something suspicious—"potentially hazardous," the police said—in a garden shed behind the house. The police never announced what it was, but it turned out not to be dangerous. The bomb squad left, and nothing more was said about what was or wasn't found in Saad al-Hilli's house.

But not quite a month later, in early October 2012, the Annecy prosecutor, Eric Maillaud, released two curious details from the search. One was that Saad recently had changed the locks. The other was that police had found a Taser, which was illegal for Saad to possess. He risked prison just for having it in the house. Maillaud seemed to temper the significance. "It could be like a woman who

carries tear gas in her bag," he told reporters, "more as a precaution than because of a specific concern." But the fact that the weapon was capable of jolting a man with 50,000 volts certainly suggested otherwise.

There still was no evidence connecting Saad's work to his murder. Nor had the search of Zaid's flat turned up anything of immediate interest. So after six weeks of official police investigation and unofficial tabloid sleuthing, with two theoretical wells running dry, another motive was leaked.

Two European newspapers-Bild in Germany, Le Monde in France-both citing anonymous German-intelligence sources, reported that Saad and Zaid's father had smuggled cash out of Iraq for Saddam Hussein and stashed it in a Swiss account. It was a deliciously dark theory-Saad assassinated for trying to get a dictator's graymarket cash out of a Geneva bank. Alps MURDER VICTIM HAD SADDAM ACCOUNT LINK, The Daily Telegraph announced, which was restrained compared with The Daily Beast's almost giddy interpretation: NEW EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT SAAD AL-HILLI AND HIS FAMILY WERE KILLED OVER SADDAM HUSSEIN'S SMUGGLED FORTUNE.





After exhausting several thin leads, the investigation found fresh air in an unknown motorcyclist, top, who'd been seen in the area during the hour of the shootings; British investigators and French prosecutor Eric Maillaud (center) address the media in Claygate. England.

Kadim al-Hilli, Saad and Zaid's father, did indeed leave cash when he died in 2011, and it was held in a Swiss bank. Saad had planned to drive to Geneva, only forty minutes east of Annecy, to inquire about that account and possibly others. Except he got killed first.

THE IDEA THAT a quadruple homicide in the French Alps involved Saddam Hussein—who himself had been dead for almost six years by then—dropped from the headlines almost as abruptly as it had appeared. The only connection between Kadim and Saddam apparently was that both were Iraqi. But it is a point upon which Zaid is particularly agitated. He is a slight man with delicate, almost bird-like features, and he has the softspoken temperament of an accountant who keeps the books at a local golf club, which he does. He seems physically incapable of full-throated anger, but his voice hitches and he clips his sentences when he is annoved.

His father, Kadim al-Hilli, had been a prosperous businessman in Iraq both before and after the Baathists seized power. He was a lawyer who began selling building materials, bricks and cement and such, and when that was successful he diversified into tissue paper and, finally, poultry; Zaid remembers, as a small boy, going to his father's hatchery in the fields outside Baghdad.

But Kadim moved his family to the London suburbs in 1971, and the reason, in Zaid's telling, matters greatly: Kadim's uncle, who was only five years older than Kadim (the two were as close as brothers), was arrested by the Mukhabarat and disappeared for a year. When he re-appeared, his brain was permanently damaged and he spoke in a slurry garble. "Of course, he was tortured," Zaid says. The uncle fled with his family to England in 1970, and Kadim followed with his wife and children less than a year later. "So to be accused of being part of that horrible regime..." That is one of the sentences Zaid clips.

Kadim returned to Iraq in 1974 to oversee his interests, Zaid says, but so what? Kadim's wealth, everything he'd built, was still in his homeland. Iraq was a dictatorship, but it still had a functioning economy, still required building materials and tissue paper and chickens and the businessmen to supply them. Why should Kadim abandon what he'd created? To survive as a merchant did not make one complicit in the crimes of the regime.

In any case, Zaid says, Kadim retired and returned to England, with his money, in 1982. That was 30 years before his son was murdered.

Yet Zaid considers that leak a piece of a whole, one of a series of fanciful speculations and calibrated whispers intended to make his brother responsible for his own death and all the others, too. He believes, in







Brothers Saad al-Hilli, top, and Zaid al-Hilli fought over the Tudor home in Claygate, England, left, that their late father, Kadim, had willed to them. In 2009, Zaid moved into the house with Saad and his family, but after a physical confrontation over the ownership, the two brothers never spoke again.

fact, that the investigation was racist—that the gendarmes, and especially Eric Maillaud, instinctively assumed three dead Arabs on a lonely mountain trail were by definition involved in something nefarious. Why else would they be there, they would have told themselves, and why else would they be dead?

"To be honest with you, I don't think there was an investigation," Zaid says. His voice is calm again, as if he is reciting facts no more or less obvious than the color of the carpet or the day of the week. "I think this was a declaration of war against us. I think they hoped these Arabs would be terrorists or drug dealers. I think we were manna from heaven for them." How much easier, he says, for the French to look across the English Channel, not to find answers to a terrible crime in their own country but to avoid them. This, too, appears plainly logical to Zaid.

"On the one hand," he says, "they say they don't know what happened. In the next sentence, they say it had nothing to do with the French cyclist. He was just in the wrong place at the wrong time. Well, those two statements contradict each other, you know, at least 50 percent."

That 50 percent is critical to Zaid's thinking. It is the difference between his brother being an unfortunate casualty or a stalked target, between Zaid being a suspect or a mourner. What if it had nothing to do with Saad? What if it had *everything* to do with the French cyclist?

CHAPTER 3 THE CYCLIST

The French cyclist was Sylvain Mollier, 45 years old, divorced, and the father of three children, two with his ex-wife and one, an infant daughter, with his live-in girlfriend. He

was an avid cyclist, but he still appeared out of place on the road rising up from Chevaline, pedaling an expensive bicycle wholly unsuited for the ruts and dents of Route de la Combe d'Ire. "It was a little bit surprising to see someone on a racing bike, because racing cyclists tend to look after their bikes," a British man also riding through Chevaline that day told the BBC. "Wheels are easily damaged on potholes and things."

Mollier, until very recently, had been employed at a factory in Ugine, a little city a few miles southeast of Lake Annecy. The factory is owned by a company called Cezus, which is a subsidiary of AREVA, one of the largest suppliers of nuclear components in the world. In the Ugine plant, zirconium and hafnium and titanium and tantalum are melted into alloys and then forged into ingots and blanks and billets, which are crafted into components for nuclear reactors, primarily the housings for fuel rods. But Mollier, on the day he died, was unemployed, having negotiated a three-year leave of absence.

He was shot five times, more than anyone else, and also twice in the head. Mollier was also, in one possible chronology, the *first* person shot, two rounds in the chest.

In the weeks after he was murdered, Mollier was variously described as a metallurgist or as a senior production manager at Cezus. It was not difficult, then, to arrange the cursory descriptors of his life—divorced, unemployed, nuclear technician—into a plausible theory. There are many organizations and even some nations—Iran, say—willing to buy nuclear secrets. And there are other nations and organizations—Israel and the Mossad were mentioned most often—that would very much prefer such technology not proliferate. Killing a renegade French technician would effectively

stop a black-market deal he might be brokering; killing three other people and trying to kill a little girl... Well, sometimes these things get messy.

Or perhaps Saad didn't just happen to be there. Maybe the French metallurgist and the Iraqi-born satellite engineer were in cahoots. Maybe they all got killed because they were all working together.

Eric Maillaud nods as those theories are sketched, his mouth close-lipped and gently curved in a way that is either weary or bemused. "For a novelist," he says finally, "it is an amazing story."

He smiles. His office looks out over the water, late-spring sunlight bleeding through a wall of windows, Mont Veyrier rising to the left and La Tournette, snowcapped and craggy blue-gray, hulking in the distance. But even here, in a medieval town cut by canals at the head of one of the cleanest and clearest lakes in Europe, murder is more two-paragraph tabloid than literature. Before l'affaire de Chevaline, as it has come to be known, killings were no different from those in Cleveland or Atlanta or Albuquerque. "Murders," Maillaud says, like cops and prosecutors everywhere, "are about either sex or money." (continued on next page)



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 247

IT HAS BEEN, on this particular afternoon with Maillaud, two years, six months, and 18 days since the al-Hillis and Mollier were murdered. In that time, investigators of course looked into Mollier's work. The novelistic theory fell apart almost immediately, because one of the presumed details was incorrect: Mollier was neither a metallurgist nor a senior production manager. He was a welder. He had no access to nuclear secrets, and the Ugine plant probably holds none, anyway: Its activities are explained, in great detail and rather proudly, on its website. (It specializes in "arc melting

Nor, it turned out, did Mollier know Saad al-Hilli. There is no evidence the two of them had ever spoken, no record of a phone call or a text message or an e-mail. True, Maillaud concedes, they could have communicated via untraceable and disposable phones, but that notion wanders back into the pages of a paperback spy story. Besides, all of the dead had their mobile phones with them.

In those years of investigation, Maillaud also has come to agree with Zaid's assessment of Saad: He was no more a spy than Mollier. His work wasn't classified, and Saad most likely had his laptops and thumb drives with him because he was looking for a job. He liked the area and had been there several times before—not just the one time with Zaid and his family as a boy. "He was considered exceptionally proficient, an engineer of renown," Maillaud says. "It wouldn't be unusual at all for him to find work here."

So maybe the motive was more mundane, no different from those in almost every other murder? What if it was sex? Or money?

Maillaud knows that Mollier reportedly had a reputation as a coureur de jupons. A skirtchaser. Maillaud says this with a shrug. It's France. It happens. Maybe husbands get jealous, but enough so to slaughter four people and try to kill a child? "That doesn't seem very realistic," he says. Anyway, Mollier's friskier days, if they existed, and near as the investigators could determine, were in his past. He'd been with his girlfriend, a pharmacist named Claire Schutz, for more than two years, and they'd just had a baby.

That leaves money. Three months after the murders, a British journalist reported that Claire Schutz in the fall of 2011 "had become a paper millionaire" when her father's pharmacy had been transferred to her. SLAIN ALPINE CYCLIST IN FEUD OVER LOVER'S FORTUNE, the headline in The Sunday Times announced on December 16, 2012. According to the story, the Schutz family was increasingly displeased with Mollier sponging off of Claire. (A contention for which we'll have to take The Sunday Times' word. The Schutz family. through Claire's very firm attorney, declined to talk. One of Mollier's brothers hung up, and another, Christophe, stayed on the phone only long enough to say he wasn't close to Sylvain and was tired of reporters pestering him.)

Maillaud hasn't been able to read everything published about l'affaire de Chevaline, but he's aware of the basic theory: that Claire Schutz's family had Mollier whacked for being a lout, and the al-Hilli family simply got in the way. Maillaud listens as it is explained again; then he shakes his head. This was investigated and dismissed long ago, he says. Claire was not yet a millionaire, on paper or otherwise, he says. She was buying the pharmacy from her father, albeit with a no-interest loan, and Mollier had no current or potential legal interest in it because the two were not married. And again, who massacres strangers over a theoretical future financial entanglement? But he's not surprised the story played well in the papers, especially in England.

"It was not conceivable for many English people, including English journalists, that the problem originated in Britain," Maillaud says. Then he laughs. "I think that the Hundred Years' War is not vet over."

Perhaps. But it also was not conceivable for many people, English and otherwise, that dozens of detectives couldn't figure out who killed

Unsolved murders are not uncommon—but you would think quadruple homicides involving middle-class professionals on vacation would get sorted out fairly quickly.

four people on a forested mountain in the middle of a Wednesday afternoon. Nor, really, was it conceivable to Maillaud. Annecy is a tourist town, the villages and campgrounds dependent on holiday travelers, on hikers and cyclists and paragliders over the lake. Such people do not typically get shot to death. When they do, there must be—there needs to be—a person who did it.

And there needs to be a reason why.

Chapter 4: The Arrest

THERE WAS A MAN riding a motorcycle on the mountain that day. Two forestry workers had stopped him above the parking area, where motor vehicles are not permitted. They shooed him away, and then that man rode down the Combe d'Ire. The British cyclist, the same one who'd noticed Mollier and his racing bike in Chevaline, passed him on his way up.

A few minutes later, the Briton found the bodies, Saad's engine still running, tires spinning in the dirt.

The forestry workers had gotten a good enough look at the motorcyclist for an artist to sketch his face. He had a goatee and a heavy brow, and he was wearing a dark helmet. It appeared to be a model that had been issued a decade ago to French police officers. Only 8.000 had been made in black.

A man in a police helmet near the scene of a quadruple murder could be, at the very least, an important witness. He could also be the killer, maybe a cop gone rogue, a gun for hire. Considering he did not voluntarily come forward to assist his brethren in a highly publicized crime, it was not unreasonable to assume the latter.

Nor was it unreasonable, then, that the sketch of his face was not released to the public, not printed in the newspapers or aired on the television news: So far as the man on the motorcycle knew, he'd gotten away clean. There was no sense in letting on that there were witnesses left behind, no sense spooking him, driving him off the grid, underground.

IN THE MONTHS after they searched his flat, through the fall and into the winter, British detectives asked Zaid al-Hilli more questions. He doesn't say exactly what those questions were, but it's safe to assume that at least some of them involved his father's estate and bank accounts in Switzerland. (The English police declined to say anything as a matter of policy and privacy laws.) At various points, a Swiss prosecutor alleged that Zaid had tried to get an unauthorized bank card to draw on his father's Geneva account; a BBC program accused him of essentially forging a will; and Eric Maillaud flat out called him-and Saad and Kadim, too-a cheat. "No matter what," Maillaud told me, "we're looking at a family that tried to defraud the British system and each other."

All of those accusations, Zaid says, have been investigated by the British authorities and found to be baseless, and he has not been charged with any such crimes. Still, finances would have been a legitimate line of inquiry. considering the brothers' strained relationship. After Zaid's wife died in 2009, he moved into the house in Claygate where Saad lived with his family. Their father had left it to both of them, and, according to Zaid, Saad wanted him to sign over his half. Zaid declined. It's unclear if that was the only point of contention-Saad can't tell his side, obviously-but it culminated in October 2011 with a physical altercation and Saad pinning his brother on a bed.

Zaid moved out, and they never spoke

In April 2013, after seven months of questions and statements, British detectives summoned Zaid for another interview. It lasted eight hours. He answered all the questions he'd answered before; there was nothing new to ask, and there was nothing new in his answers. Still, the police called him back again two weeks later. That interrogation lasted two hours.

On June 6, a French officer, accompanied by an English one to interpret, presented Zaid with a summons ordering him to appear in France as a witness. Zaid refused to accept it. "I don't trust them," he says now. "To be honest with you, if the French authorities told me the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. I would think they were lying." What if the French snuck a smear of his DNA from a tissue or a soda can? Zaid didn't want to leave his DNA in France.

For almost three weeks, he heard nothing more about appearing in France. He knew the French couldn't force him to go unless they got an order from an English court-and he was certain an English court, looking at the evidence and the lack thereof, would never issue such an order.

But then, at seven thirty in the morning on the last Monday of June 2013, two female detectives knocked on his door. "We're here to arrest you," they told him, "for conspiracy to commit murder."

Chapter 5: The Journalist and the Murder

ZAID'S ARREST WAS no more than a hiccup in the investigation, another promising plotline—like espionage and adultery and Saddam before-that collapsed under the slightest weight. I'd followed each development (none of which developed into much of anything) for more than eight months by the time Zaid was locked up, and I would continue to do so for almost two years after. Unsolved murders are not uncommon-there are thousands in the United States every year, for instance, and serial killers only manage to become serial killers because they get away with the first two or ten or twenty. But you would think that quadruple homicides, particularly those involving middle-class professionals on vacation, would get sorted out fairly quickly. That scores of detectives and gendarmes hadn't managed to do so suggested either epic incompetence or criminal brilliance.

I went to see Zaid last spring, in March. Reporters don't pester him much anymore, but his name had been inked into so many headlines and chyrons following his brother's murder that his reputation had fossilized. "Yeah, yeah, those people on holiday," a London cabbie remembered when I mentioned a murder in the Alps. "Awful. The brother did it, right?"

Zaid lives a couple of stations south of Waterloo, in a flat walking distance from the train. He served tea and biscuits, and later we had lunch at the fish shop across the street. He was pleasant, if emotionally reserved, which he had discovered is not an advantage when police and reporters are asking about one's slaughtered family. "They think I should have reacted a different way," he said.

Like, crv, maybe?

He blinked twice. "I am who I am. I hate pretending."

It wasn't so awful, despite the indignity, being arrested for conspiring to kill his brother and three other people, as well as the attempted murder of a niece he adores. Zaid knew he didn't do it, and it did not appear the British police believed he was a dangerous criminal, let alone a mass murderer. The detectives who arrested him waited while he showered and shaved and dressed, and they smiled at a small joke: It would have been more convenient, Zaid told them, if they'd waited a day so he could finish payroll at the golf club. They did not handcuff him, and they'd parked discreetly at the end of his block, so as not to make a spectacle. They did not release his name, nor even officially confirm that he'd been arrested.

Zaid spent a single night in a surprisingly comfortable cell—"it had a little button you could press if you wanted tea, like room service"—and the jailers allowed him a couple of mild sedatives, as Zaid has difficulty sleeping in unfamiliar places. He was released the next morning on bail, but that was far less dramatic than it appears. In the United States, bail in such a serious crime would be set by a judge after a hearing, and it would be substantial, requiring enough cash or a big enough bond

to assure the accused returned to court. In Surrey, Zaid was simply sent home with a form instructing him not to bother any potential witnesses and to continue living in his flat in Chessington. He posted no surety, and he did not surrender his passport; indeed, he traveled to Borneo and Hong Kong in the fall of 2013, when his bail conditions still were in effect.

For all that, Zaid didn't know anything more about the crime or the investigation than any careful reader of the more reputable press.

So I went to France. Annecy is a pleasant train trip southeast from Paris, and the station is at the edge of the Old City, a short walk from the lake and the cafés anchored to the rims of the canals. Chevaline, where everyone got killed, is a pretty twenty-minute drive south along the lake.

There is a single main road through Chevaline, which is all a village of 207 people requires. It runs past a monument to the local boys killed in the war, and then a small church and its cemetery and, on the other side, a crumbling stone wall where a dozing cat startled at the sound of my Fiat. There is a big cattle barn at the end of the village and one last, thick pasture, and then the road climbs into the forest.

Snow lingered on the Combe d'Ire in late March, smears of slush and, higher up, wide patches of dirty white crusted with crystals that crunched under the tires. Tree limbs leaned into the road, crowded the pavement until, at the foot of a bridge, fallen branches blocked it completely. The only way to the top was on foot, meandering through the white noise of the river pouring over rocks and mossy boulders.

In the village hall, an ochre building marked by the war memorial, I asked the clerk if a storm had blown through recently, torn the trees, and cluttered the road.

No, she said.

But would the road be cleared?

Yes, she suspected it would be. Eventually. But there was no rush, she said. "Practically nobody" ever drove that way.

She did not ask why I wanted to know. She did not ask if I wanted to drive up that road. She was very pleasant, but not at all curious. She had long ago tired of foreigners with notebooks asking her questions.

The Gendarmerie Nationale were no help at all. A "non-communication" had been put in place on all things Chevaline, and a spokesman in Paris didn't foresee it being lifted anytime soon. That order did not apply, however, to Annecy prosecutor Eric Maillaud, who was happy, or at least willing, to meet. (He was also the only person close to the case willing to talk to me.) He was patient and thorough, and he answered every question or, regarding a few minor details, explained why he couldn't. And everything he told me, all of it, amounts to this: He does not know who killed those four people, or why, or even who was the target and who got in the way.

There is no reason to believe this is because of incompetence or conspiracy.

So that leaves criminal brilliance. Or a very bad person with very good luck.

The question is, which is more disturbing?

TWO DAYS BEFORE he was murdered, Saad al-Hilli pulled his BMW with the Bürstner camper on the hitch into Le Solitaire du Lac, a

campground on the western shore of the lake. In early September, there would have been shade beneath leafed-out trees planted in a long double row stretching toward the water. In late March, the limbs are all pollarded away, and the trunks stand like gnarled gray fists poking up from the grass. A man is playing with his dog in a parking area, but no one else is around. There are no campers or tents, and the little box cottages are all empty. No one answers the bell at the office.

Eventually a small utility truck putters around a corner. The driver, a man with a ruddy face and gray hair and a pitchfork, gets out, walks toward us, my interpreter and me. He is not pleased.

"I've never let a journalist come in," he says, "and I won't let you come in, either."

Yes, but this is where the al-Hillis stayed, right?

"I've never authorized the media to be here." Do you remember them?

A pause. His face darkens. "Yes," he says. "Unfortunately, yes."

MORE THAN A YEAR after the murders, in October 2013, French authorities finally released the sketch of the motorcyclist. The risk of sending him off the grid by then seemed less disastrous than never finding him—either the key witness or the killer—at all.

Dozens of investigators had followed every conceivable lead. The Briton who'd seen Sylvain Mollier and the motorcyclist was, briefly and as a matter of course, a suspect. His name is Brett Martin, and he is a retired Royal Air Force pilot with a holiday home in Lathuile, a village south of the lake. He was on his own meandering ride that afternoon when he found the blood and the bodies.

An English family and a French cyclist are killed by a precision shooter, and the first person on the scene is a former English military man with a home in France? What are the odds? The technicians swabbed him for gunpowder residue, and the detectives checked and rechecked his story. When Martin swore he never heard 21 gunshots fired less than 200 meters from where he was pedaling, investigators conducted acoustic tests. They discovered that, indeed, between the tumble of the river and sound tending to bounce up and the human brain simply not recognizing a volley of pops in an Alpine forest as gunfire, Martin would not have heard anything.

The investigation plodded on. Every satellite company in Europe, Maillaud says, dug through its archive of images from September 5, 2012, and detectives studied those for any clue-tire tracks, vehicles, an unaccounted person—buried in the pixels. There were two bits of unmatched DNA on the al-Hillis' car, but a search of every known DNA database in Europe couldn't identify them. (Probably meaningless, anyway: One is a few skin cells on the front bumper, as if someone brushed against it in a parking lot, and the other, under the floor mat on the driver's side, was likely left by a detailer.) The day of the murders, more than 4,000 cell phones had pinged the nearest tower, and every one was being tracked down to identify potential witnesses or, assuming the shooter had been sloppy enough to make a call, the killer.

In February 2014, gendarmes knocked on the door of a man named Eric Devouassoux.

a 48-year-old in Lathuile, whose mobile number was one of the 4,000. He sort of looked like the motorcyclist in the sketch, and in the weeks leading up to September 5, 2012, he'd applied for a permit to carry a firearm and gotten sacked from his job as a policeman because of his temper. But there was nothing to connect him to Mollier or al-Hilli or put him on that road on that day. Unfortunately, though, he had a collection of guns, including some World War II-era weapons, which is neither unusual—the Haute-Savoie region was a center of the French Resistance, and heirlooms get passed down-nor illegal, as long as they're declared. His were not, and there were enough of them that he was charged with arms trafficking. (Maillaud shrugs when he explains this, which translates easily into Sucks to be Eric Devouassoux. Enough so, apparently, that Devouassoux hung up on me, too. The charges, however, were later dropped.)

The only thing possibly left outstanding, other than a motive and a killer, was a gray BMW 4x4 that might or might not exist. It was described by only one person, a different forestry worker, and one who fancies BMWs.

"There's an old saying," Maillaud says. "One witness is no witness."

Maybe it had been there, and maybe it would turn up someday. But more months passed, then a second full year. No new clues, no new suspects. Only Zaid had been arrested, and then immediately released.

"We have tried everything possible," Maillaud told reporters on the second anniversary. "But perhaps we're in the presence of the perfect crime."

Chapter 6: The Perfect Crime

SAAD AL-HILLI DROVE onto a ferry in Dover and then off again at Calais on August 30, 2012, the week before the murders. There are security cameras at the terminal, and more cameras at toll plazas and gas stations and along the highway. The gendarmes pulled thousands of images from those cameras, and they scoured them for the maroon BMW with UK plates pulling a white camper. Then they compared those photos with each other, looking for another car or a motorcycle that appeared in several or at least more than one. They did not find one.

"We're quite sure they weren't followed," Eric Maillaud says now. "We can't be completely sure"—it is possible, though vanishingly improbable, that someone was clever enough to remain outside the field of vision of every single CCTV lens across the length of France—"but you never see the same vehicle twice. Not even one time do you see the same vehicle."

That is: No one tailed the al-Hillis to Le Solitaire du Lac.

On the family's second morning at the campground, September 5, Saad asked his daughter Zainab what she would like to do that afternoon. He could take her shopping in Annecy, or they could go for a walk in the woods. Zainab said she wanted to walk in the woods.

Saad knew the general area, but not the best paths into the wilderness. He asked the man at the campground, the one with the ruddy face and the gray hair and the pitchfork, where he should take his family. The campground man might have suggested the narrow road

climbing out of Chevaline or he might have suggested Saad take a hairpin left at the bottom. It's easy enough to miss. Or he might have suggested somewhere else entirely; he wouldn't say. In any case, once Saad started up the mountain, he had no choice but to continue to the parking area three kilometers on.

"We know," Maillaud tells me, "and this is a certitude, that when they found themselves at the top of the Combe d'Ire, it was not the father's choice."

It was Zainab's choice, and perhaps a navigational misstep.

Saad passed Sylvain Mollier on the way up. He, too, apparently had gotten lost. His girlfriend's father had suggested a route, and Maillaud wonders if maybe Mollier was supposed to have taken that same sharp left at the bottom. But he started pedaling up a mountain instead, and he could have turned around, but some people would rather keep going. "An athlete," Maillaud says, "is stubborn."

Not far from the parking area, his mobile phone rang. It was Claire. Mollier was out of breath, panting. He told her he had to get to the top, and he'd call her back.

He got off his bike near where the al-Hillis were parked. Saad was probably talking to him. Saad was always the outgoing one, Zaid says, chatty and friendly. Most likely he was asking about Mollier's bike. Saad liked bikes.

The case had dissolved into the most terrifying ambiguity, a random lunatic on a random day slaughtering random people with the tactical precision of an assassin.

Then the shooting started.

An early report said blood splatters on the soles of Saad's shoes indicated Mollier was shot first, already bleeding before Saad got into the BMW. But Maillaud is firm that investigators do not know the order of the targets. That is a narrative detail, he says, that will need to be explained. "Until we find the killer," he says, "we won't know."

There was only one gunman. Maillaud is sure of that. The precision of the shooting, the two rounds in each head, suggests he is a professional; the number of bodies suggests he was experienced; and the attempted murder of a child suggests a hardened efficiency. Yet he left 21 shell casings on the ground, which a professional probably would not have, and he used an antique 7.65-millimeter Luger issued by the Swiss army more than 60 years ago, which a professional probably wouldn't do, either. The investigators are certain of the weapon, because a piece of the butt broke off when the shooter fractured Zainab's skull with it. They think he clubbed her because he ran out of bullets, which also is not professional.

Beyond that, Maillaud is sure of nothing. He has found no reason for anyone to kill either Sylvain Mollier or Saad al-Hilli. In early March 2015, even his anonymous wild-card suspect, the man on the motorcycle, was ruled out. He'd been discovered to be a businessman from Lyon who'd been paragliding in the area.

Maillaud won't release his name but insists he has no criminal record of any kind and no connection to any of the dead.

"Objectively," Maillaud concedes, "it is more and more improbable that Zaid did this." This is not a conclusion he offers gracefully. "Just because they hated each other, which they did," he says, "and just because they wanted to take each other's money, which they did, that doesn't mean he would kill everybody."

Well, yes. But there's also the part about no one knowing Saad al-Hilli would be at the top of Combe d'Ire that afternoon. Objectively, then, it's closer to impossible than improbable.

It is still possible, if remotely and implausibly, that Mollier was the target and Maillaud and all the others—dozens of investigators and magistrates and judges—know it. But that's an enormous amount of people to keep a horrifying secret, and Maillaud can't be that good a liar or that monstrous a person.

All of which leaves this: Neither al-Hilli nor Mollier was the target. They all were in the wrong place at the absolute worst time.

Maillaud refuses to rank investigatory theories in a hierarchy. But that is semantic caution. The target, he says, "was one, the other, or neither." If there is no evidence for one or the other—and there isn't—there is only neither.

So that leaves a lone nut. A sociopath who, for reasons known only to him or her, loosed 21 rounds into five strangers. That would be the rarest of crimes, the stuff of campfire stories and ghost legends. But what else is there, except a monster in the forest? What had seemed so obvious—a purposeful, if sloppy, hit on a foreigner involved in something sinister—had dissolved into the most terrifying ambiguity, a random lunatic on a random day slaughtering random people with the tactical precision of an assassin.

Investigators cross-checked military records with those of psychiatric hospitals. They found no renegade patients, no one recently released with homicidal tendencies and excellent marksmanship. But in April 2014, while working through an extensive list of anyone Claire Schutz remembered ever knowing, detectives summoned a former soldier for a routine interview. His name was Patrice Menegaldo, he was 50 years old, and he lived in Ugine. He'd been a paratrooper in the French Foreign Legion, an elite fighting force composed partly of misfits and ruffians running away from something else; Legionnaires are not, by temperament or training, fragile men. He was asked questions for an hour and then sent on his way.

Two months later, Menegaldo shot himself in the head.

"He wrote a letter saying the reason was 'I could not handle being a suspect in a murder,' Maillaud says. He arches an eyebrow. "That doesn't sound very believable. It doesn't make sense that a Legionnaire would kill himself after an hour in a police station."

No, it doesn't sound believable at all. Especially since Menegaldo was interviewed as a tangential *witness*. No one considered him a suspect.

Except, maybe, Menegaldo.

But *why* would he feel like a suspect? The detectives did not accuse him. He was never in custody. There was no evidence connecting him to the crime or to anyone involved, except for Claire's memory of having peripherally known him.

THE PERFECT MURDER CONTINUED

He did it. It was Menegaldo in the woods with the gun. That's what we're supposed to believe, or what we're supposed to want to believe. "He corresponds," Maillaud says, "with the profile of a crazy gunman." It's an easy leap, then, a lunatic driven to suicide by the staggering weight of his guilt. He can't deny it now, can he?

But why wait two months after his interview to blow his brains out? And 21 months after he would've tried to beat a little girl to death? And there's this: Why would he leave a seven-page suicide letter, the details of which Maillaud will not release?

Maybe he was just a depressed old soldier with seven pages of reasons. There's still nothing tangible, or even reliably speculative, that puts Menegaldo on that mountain at that time.

So Maillaud is no further along on the third anniversary than he was at the second or the first. Perhaps he truly is in the presence of a perfect crime.

He considers this. Afternoon sun pours through his windows, glints off the lake, carves shadows on the mountains. Annecy is beautiful in the early spring.

"I don't like," he says after a moment, "perfect crimes."

THERE WAS ONE FINAL ANGLE. It

popped up in July 2014, about the time reporters would have been preparing stories about the second anniversary of an unsolved quadruple homicide. It didn't get a lot of attention beyond the first day or two, and maybe it didn't deserve to. But here it is:

Seven hours after the murders in the Alps, a man named James Thompson told a friend he felt nauseated. He asked for some aspirin, left an antiques shop he ran in Natchez, Mississippi, U.S.A., and climbed into his truck.

Thompson was a former cop and an oil-field worker. He also was divorced, amicably, from an Iraqi dentist he married in 1999, apparently as a favor. They split up a few months later. She moved to England, where she met an engineer named Saad al-Hilli. They courted for three months, got married, had two baby girls who were now 4 and 7. They vacationed in a white Bürstner camper towed behind Saad's maroon BMW, the last time to the shore of a cold, clear lake high in the mountains of eastern France.

Iqbal al-Hilli kept her first marriage a secret. Not even Zaid knew, until French investigators announced it. "She seemed to be this nice Muslim woman," Maillaud says now, "and here she married an American. People have exploded families for less than that."

Thompson pulled into the street. His truck veered to the right and rolled to a slow stop in the road. He had his foot on the brake, and the rest of him was slumped over the wheel. Dead.

He was overweight, and his blood pressure was high, and he smoked cigars, and he'd just turned 60. That James Thompson would have a massive coronary was not startling. That he would suffer one seven hours after his secret exwife was shot twice in the head in an unsolved crime with no motive and no suspects is almost certainly a coincidence. So far as anyone can tell, at least, which isn't very far at all.

ROB LOWE



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 225

F#%k resentment. "For someone in recovery like me, the single greatest hurdle—the number one with a bullet that will make you drink—is resentment. You can't have it. People always say, 'How have you been sober 26 years? What's the secret?' Well, that's it."

Find a high that's harmless. "Jet lag is the closest I get to getting high these days. I get a little light-headed and really energetic. Crazy energy. It's cool. It reminds me of 1985."

Always an option: a new tattoo. "Here on my shoulder is my I'm-still-crazy tattoo. My I-may-be-sober-but-I'm-still-a-fucking-badass tattoo. It's all faded and fucked-up, but it used to be a koi fish."

If life gives you Malibu, make Malibu-ade. "When I was growing up in Malibu, I used to trickor-treat at Martin Sheen's house, just hoping he would answer the door. By the end of high school, I became friends with Charlie Sheen and Emilio. We'd float around their pool, and Chris Penn-Sean's brother, who is no longer with us; what a sweet boy-was the filmmaking auteur of the neighborhood. In Malibu in the '70s, it was always time to make a Super 8 film about Nam. Everything was about Nam. Oh, and Charlie made a great movie starring his buddy Johnny Depp where the whole premise was blowing up the Fotomat. Remember Fotomats? Anyway, what Laurel Canyon was to music in '68 and '70, Malibu was to young actors. The place was fucking unreal."

Understand the times you're in, especially if your timing is not great. "Back in the early '80s, there was a movie everybody wanted to be in called Birdy. It ended up being cast with Matthew Modine and Nic Cage. That movie today stars Chris Hemsworth. The studios today want the modern version of Tab Hunter. Everything is about youth. It would have been interesting to have come up now, when traditional leading men are really valued. In the time that I came up, the anti-leading man was valued. Sean Penn. Mickey Rourke. When Mickey walked [onto the set] of *The Outsiders*, it was like you would have thought Brando showed up. They were kowtowing to him. He was on roller skates and hadn't bathed. It was not probably the best time ever for somebody like me."

Fightfor what's yours. "Surfing is a head-clearer. One time I took off on a wave next to a guy, and he grabbed my leash and yanked it. I went flying. So I paddled back and fucking hit him. I may wear makeup for a living, but I will fight you in the water."

amy wallace is a GQ correspondent.

RYAN REYNOLDS



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 212

as an actor worth watching even when more high-profile stuff like *R.I.P.D.* failed him.

Reynolds is well aware of the perception that blockbuster Hollywood, for lack of a better term, has sometimes been unkind to his career. There is a very pointed *Green Lantern* joke in the trailer for *Deadpool*, which will be out early next year. And there is an even more pointed Ryan Reynolds joke in another *Deadpool* teaser, which advertises its star as "five-time Academy Award viewer Ryan Reynolds." The line came from Reynolds.

Is there a secret note of pain in that joke?

"A little bit, yeah. But that's what makes it funny, I think. I wish I was a five-time Academy Award winner. I don't wake up in the middle of the night at a perfect right angle thinking, 'Why have I not been nominated for five Academy Awards?' I can pretty much tell you why."

Why?

"Well, I mean, I have not... That hasn't been the chief sort of goal for me at all. I mean, even if it was the chief goal for me, I don't know if I could ever be in that ring."

Deadpool is in many ways both the comicbook project and the Ryan Reynolds project people have been waiting for—irreverent, wisecracking, subversive, not too taken with itself—and it will arrive at an interesting moment for comic-book films in general. The week we talk, Fantastic Four has just shattered into a thousand brittle pieces at the box office, cooling the ascent, at least temporarily, of a bright young cast that includes Miles Teller and Michael B. Jordan (see page 196). I ask Reynolds what he makes of that, the experience of young actors getting caught in a maelstrom beyond their control.

"I'm more frustrated about the Michael B. Jordan aspect than Miles Teller. You know, Miles Teller's gonna recover. Miles Teller's gonna go on to do amazing things, you know. It's important that Michael B. Jordan continues to go on and do amazing things."

He's been scrupulous this entire time to be polite, to not name names, but he's seen what his industry is capable of, good and bad. "I know it's not easy for a black actor. It's not easy for a female actor. That entire cast is amazingly talented. And I wouldn't wish that on anybody. I know what that feels like. It doesn't feel good."

He pauses. He's made it to the other side, but for an instant he's back there. "It's difficult, because you don't feel like you can control that outcome. As much as you want to."

He gestures around the barn, at the baby monitor on the table, and smiles. "I've sort of surrendered to the idea that it's just gonna be the way it's gonna be."

 ${\tt ZACH\ BARON}\ is\ {\tt GQ's}\ staff\ writer.$



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 235

is broken. These couples are often desperate and "beyond jealousy." Part of his willingness to be so public about what he does, to put his life on display, he said, is so that his children will know exactly why he acted as he did and that he, above all, had their best interests at heart in choosing to couple with their mothers.

Besides the actual doing of it, Ed plays other roles: quasi-therapist, quasi-friend, quasi-lover, quasi-father. His is a life revolving around ovulation thermometers, pregnancy tests, bodily fluids, and occasional fleeting moments of unbridled joy when things work out. The transactional relationship is anything but simple.

But spend enough time in Ed Houben's world and you begin to get the feeling that his entire life is quasi-and fleeting. He feels he should quit by 50, four years from now, when his sperm quality will likely be declining. Would he miss it? "Maybe I would miss the variety, but I'd trade it all for love anyway, a family of my own. But I have made it so that that is almost impossible."

"I cannot imagine there not being a hole in my life," said Ed.

IN THE GUEST ROOM, then, is there an art to the lovemaking?

"Normal methods," says Ed. Missionary is best, but he prefers a side-by-side position (especially "if you're bloody tired," which, between a 40-hour workweek and his lineup of women, he always seems to be). Foreplay, both manual and oral: yes. Later he clarifies in a text: "We see all forms of foreplay both consent to as contribution [sic] to a better chance. The more we accept each other as physical lovers, the more excited about each other we are, the more our bodies prepare for success."

Has he ever been hurt—a fall from the bed. a blow from the headboard?

"No, never." Though back in his artificialinsemination days, he ran into a painful predicament. It came during a stretch when Ed was flooded with donor requests, i.e., a time of excessive masturbation. "The skin got lesions, and they wouldn't heal. Even with the help of my family doctor, I had to leave it totally alone for six weeks. I couldn't do

"Maybe I would miss the variety," said Ed, "but I'd trade it all for love anyway, a family of my own.... I cannot imagine there not being a hole in my life."

anything for anybody for six weeks. Maybe, I thought, it was the universe's intention that a child would be created. But now it won't." The six weeks gave him time to retool, as it were. "That started a bit of a process in my mind," he says, "because, you know, the natural way is always lubricated."

The oldest woman he's ever tried with? Forty-nine.

The longest he's tried with someone? Six years and counting.

How many tries in a day with one woman?

How many sets of twins?

Four.

Number of virgins with whom he's had sex? Four.

Percent of husbands in the room during intercourse?

"I would say no more than 20 percent." Percent of lesbian couples?

Forty.

STDs?

"I get tested every six months. If some women could have their way, the test would be no more than a week old, but no one's going to mistake me for a heroin addict."

Ever date for fun?

"What would I date for? I basically drown in one-night stands. But I would love to have a relationship."

Biggest conundrum?

"Once they're pregnant, they're gone. It's a bit of a hollow shell."

Strange requests in the boudoir?

"I've had no requests which I would categorize as strange. In that sense, I admire the courage of the women who say they prefer natural method, but that's usually it."

Ever run out of sperm?

"That was a longtime concern of mine. Three days of abstinence is perfect. But there was this woman from Germany. We met at six in a hotel in Maastricht, we slept together, half an hour, everything was ducky... She was hardly gone when a Belgian couple contacted my cell phone and said they were ovulating. I said, 'Okay, but there will be only two hours of abstinence,' and they said, 'Better a small chance than no chance.' The small chance is now a 7-year-old girl."

IN TALKING AT length to Ed, I began to wonder even more about the couples who came to him, so he contacted a wife and husband, brand-new clients who agreed to meet with me at their home in Germany.

Lara, 36, answered the door smiling, while her husband, Max, 40, floated cheerily in the shadows. (Both requested anonymity.) Lara and Max lived in a largish house for two, under gray skies, in the rich flatlands of the north. They'd just seen Ed five nights earlier. They'd met him for a glass of wine first, in a town halfway between Maastricht and theirs, to make sure he wasn't an ax murderer. Then they retired to a hotel. Two rooms-Ed had taken one, they the other. And at the appointed hour, Lara left Max and went next door.

When I'd told friends at home about Ed and his work, they usually lasered in on the married couples, the wife and husband, and how they accepted their roles in this. How Lara and Max had reached this place was amazing, even to them. Said Lara: "If you'd told me a week into my marriage that five years from now you're going to find this Dutch guy and... Never. Ever!" When they weren't pregnant after six months of trying, they'd had tests done. They learned that Max's sperm was weak and that Lara was tilting toward early menopause. They soon realized they were part of a statistical group, the one couple in ten who need help getting pregnant. They tried treatments, five in all, at \$6,000 a shot. (In the United States, IVF can cost \$15,000 per attempt.) Lara had two miscarriages. The last, in the middle of the pregnancy, was the worst.

"Everything was fine," said Lara. "No pain, no bleeding. And then we came back to the clinic for the next ultrasound, and [the doctor] didn't say anything for the first couple of minutes. I was like, 'Well, I can already tell what's going on. There's no heartbeat anymore.' The heartbeat just stopped."

That's when they realized they were part of another statistical group, the one out of two for whom IVF doesn't work. Broke and bereft. they felt boxed in, untrusting. They contemplated adoption, but Lara harbored fears of

> Ed really did serve as the seed but then not much more. As soon as his function was fulfilled, he began to vanish. He became a footnote.

legal loopholes and more heartbreak. "Being unlucky in the whole process, I didn't feel strong enough to be able to handle it if a child was taken away from me," she said.

Years ago, as it turned out, they'd seen Ed on German TV. She'd written his name down but lost it and couldn't remember it. Three weeks ago, they were watching TV and he appeared before them again. They thought of it as pure serendipity. "We were sitting here that night and asked each other, 'Yeah, what do you think about that?" said Lara. "'I mean, we've done this, this, this, and that.... Why not?" Soon enough, they were driving to meet him for drinks. "We had good conversation. He's a nice guy. That's enough for me. I don't have the intention to start a modeling company, so what do I need good looks for? I just want a real baby."

That day, Lara admits, she was very nervous-as was Max-but after having been through all the hardship, she was also fairly Zen. ("What we learned from the last year: being humble, being patient, making peace even if it never works. Then, we're not going to die. We've still got each other. We've got this place. We're pretty happy here.") She'd had one-night stands in her youth, before dating Max. She knew she didn't have to, as she says, "be in love to have good sex." Her only worry was that she "might feel like a prostitute after," and that the feeling might change something essential between her and Max. But then, in Ed's room, she said that she never stopped thinking about Max, while in the other room Max couldn't stop thinking about her. "When I came back to our room and I saw him and was smelling him, I had so much appreciation," said Lara, squeezing his hand. "That was my

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feeling. And for you?" she said, waiting for Max's thoughts, which he spoke back to her in German. "Okay, so he was happy that the situation was over," said Lara, "and that I got out of it being okay.

"Having sex is not having sex in that situation for him. It is coming towards a target. But if I went out alone with Ed for dinner, he would get jealous."

This was a very specific kind of parsing, in which Ed really did serve as the seed but then not much more. As soon as his function was fulfilled, he began to vanish. He became a footnote. Perhaps it was almost beside the point to care what to make of Ed, to assess some final judgment or moral rank. These were unwritten pacts, wrought from secret worlds most of us would never understand. Lara and Max said they planned to keep meeting with Ed until either Lara got pregnant or "it didn't feel right anymore." And if they were to have a baby, would they visit him again? "That's not how we're thinking about it," said Lara. (A while later, when I followed up with Lara, she told me that she'd had a "biochemical pregnancy" that hadn't taken and that she was still trying with Ed.)

I thought about this—and couldn't get that image out of my head, the one Lara had just painted, of her and Max that night in their room, having taken a big step toward their dream hopefully, wrapped in each other's arms. And then I thought of Ed again, alone in his hotel room, T-shirt covering his belly, clicker in hand, maybe watching the symphony on TV.

It reminded me, too, of that little boy and his father on the street in Maastricht, the father pointing up to the star in Ed's window, calling him the Babymaker.

"He apparently said it in such a nice way," said Ed when he'd first told the story, "like a guy in Paris saying, 'Oh, there's the Eiffel Tower,' you know, not condemning or anything."

No, it was like the most natural thing. The Babymaker. Who lives up there. Making babies. For free. Beyond judgment and loneliness.

Making more babies after those babies, too, as many as possible, really, too many to count anymore, in order to fill some hole in the world, or maybe one inside of him, too, for even the Babymaker doesn't know which anymore.

 $\verb| MICHAEL PATERNITI| is a \verb| GQ| correspondent|.$

MICHAEL B. JORDAN



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 198

"A lot of females that didn't agree with this agenda."

How does that go?

"It goes like it goes. They want what they want, I tell them what I want. It doesn't quite work out that well. That's why I'm by myself."

Are you lonely?

"I'm not. I understand what females want and need, you know. I'm good at that. I don't know if I'm the guy to give it to them right now. Until I find something that's so undeniable that I can't help myself."

Do you think you've ever been in love? He pauses. "I've probably been in infatuation."

That's kind of a "no."

He nods. "Kind of a 'no.'"

That's not to say that his life is free of temporary distractions. The week before we meet he posted a picture of himself on vacation in Capri. He shows me more photos on his phone: living on a boat, shimmering blue sea, offshore rocks with holes in them that remind him of *The Goonies*. He's not the only person in some of the photos. There's also someone he identifies as a girl from Milan. "Just friends," he says. "Getting to know each other."

Jordan was recently photographed leaving a Met Gala afterparty in New York at the same time as Kendall Jenner, and there was a brief ripple of stories wondering whether the two of them were dating, speculation which was dampened by "sources" insisting that the photo was simply two people by chance leaving a party at the same time. Nevertheless, it stirred up a little online squall, with those who presented themselves as Jordan's fans almost universally hostile to the idea.

"It's the world we live in," says Jordan. "They see white and black. I don't. Kendall's a friend of mine, you know. I don't know her, like, that well, but I know her enough. People's perspective on that is what it is. I don't fucking know. I don't live my life to make other people happy. It's so weird, though, right? A lot of black fans were feeling like, 'Oh, my God, he should have been with a black woman' and that whole thing. I get it, but on the other hand it's, like, relax. You know—it's 2015. It's okay! People can like one another, not necessarily from the same history or culture or whatever the fuck it is. It's just the new world, you know what I mean?"

Stay Alive (Mostly).

AS JORDAN GRADUATED from teenage roles in the best of modern episodic TV—*The* Wire, Friday Night Lights-and began to get bigger and bigger movie roles, they all had one increasingly uncomfortable thing in common: Jordan always ended up dying. His principal film roles between 2007 and 2013 were as follows: Blackout, Red Tails, Chronicle, and Fruitvale Station. He survives in none of them. During the press tour for the film that followed, the semi-comedy That Awkward *Moment*, he would explain that one reason he took the role was that he didn't want to put his mother through another on-screen death. He'd joke about it, but it bothered him. "It's like, stereotypes of black-guys-always-die-inmovies and all that shit. That didn't help any. My friends gave me a lot of shit about that. It was one of those things: 'Stop dying in those movies, man.' It's like the running joke with horror movies-if the black guy's there, you know he's the first one gone."

That became a line drawn in the sand. "I told [my agents] after *Fruitvale*, 'I'm not dying anymore—it's not happening,' "he says. "I don't want people to get comfortable with seeing me die all the time."

He knows perfectly well that it's a rule he'll have to break, sooner or later.

"Of course. But I had to establish a run of films that I win, and I am on top. I ain't dying in *Creed*. I'll tell you that right now—spoiler alert! Adonis does not die, okay? Then, yeah, later on, down the line...you know, I want to play Sam Cooke one day."

Chris heath is a GQ correspondent.

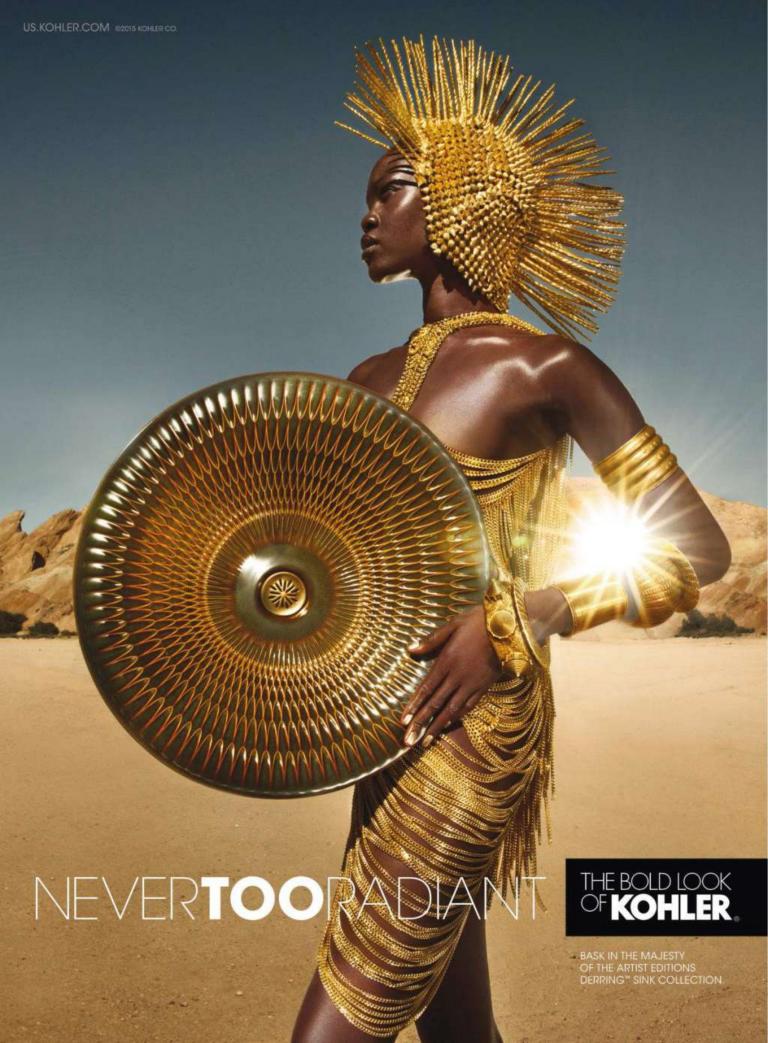
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